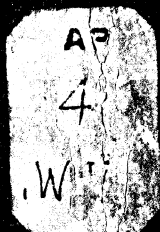


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WINDSOR  
MAGAZINE

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JUNE-NOV

1924

















# THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY  
FOR MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. LX

JUNE TO NOVEMBER 1924

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED  
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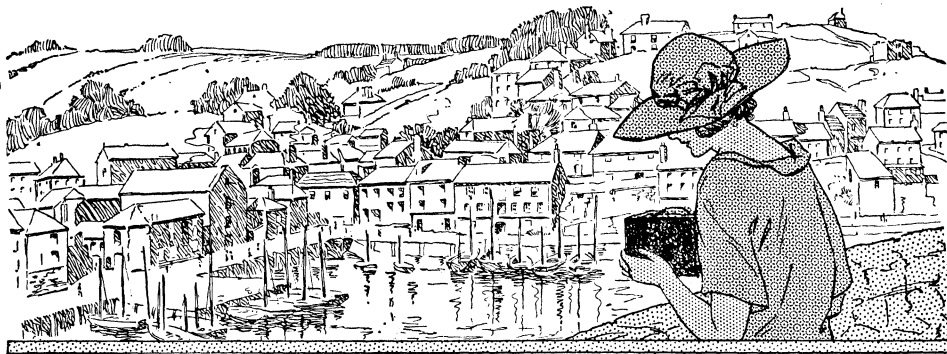
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6. The proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap reserve to themselves the right of purchasing the copyright of any of the photographs sent for £2 2s. each.
7. Kodak Limited will act as judges to the Competition, and their decision must be accepted as final.
8. Competitors may choose any of the following subjects, and the prizes will be awarded to the pictures that best illustrate the spirit of the title; photographic excellence or technical quality will not count—it is the picture that will win the prize.

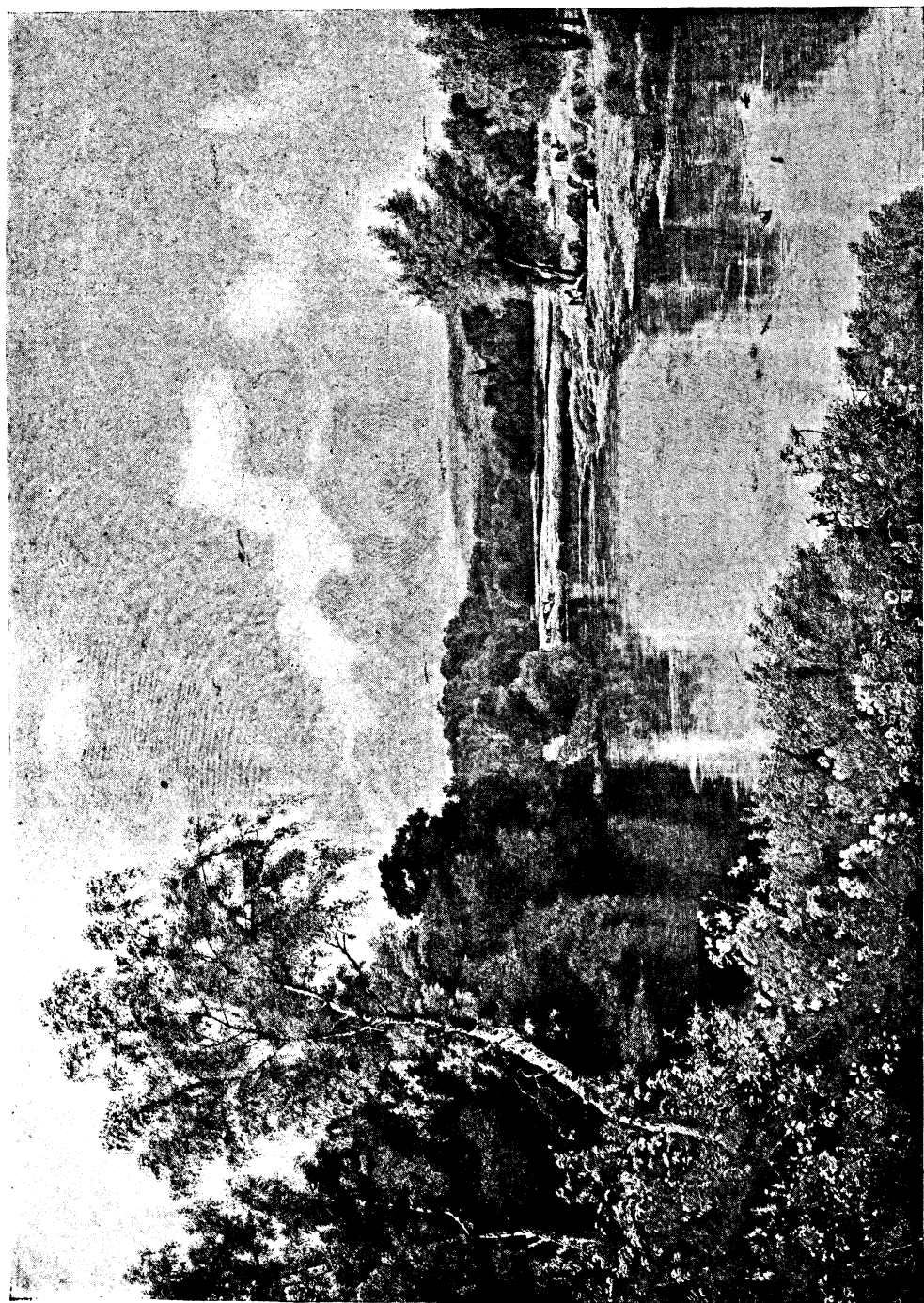
#### SUBJECTS.

Children at Play. Pets.  
A Day with a Hawk-Eye.  
Sports and Pastimes.  
Boy Scouts or Girl Guides.  
Outdoors in Spring.  
Nature Study.









THE GOLDEN VALE. BY JOHN CLAYTON ADAMS.

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"And it wasn't Caesar's,  
Jeremy. It was ours—yours  
and mine. . . ."

# UNTO CÆSAR

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "Valerie French," "Berry and Co.," "Jonah and Co.," "Anthony Lyveden,"  
"The Brother of Daphne," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

EVE MALORY CAREW tilted her sweet pretty chin.

"It's my hair," she said.

"Exactly," said Jeremy Broke. "That's why to cut it would be so—so blasphemous. If it was anybody else's, it'd be their funeral. But your hair's a sort of national treasure, like Ann Hathaway's Cottage or Arthur's Seat—I mean, Leith Hill. It's not really yours to cut."

"It's mine to brush," said Eve: "and

fix and do generally. If you had a beard——"

"That's an idea," said Broke. "If you cut your hair, I'll grow a blinkin' beard: a long, spade-shaped one—by way of protest."

Eve laughed delightedly.

"But how," she gurgled, "how would that affect me? If we kissed when we met, or always dined *tête-à-tête*. . . ."

"I trust," said Jeremy stiffly, "that the indecent spectacle of an old friend gone

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wrong would twist the tail of your conscience. Besides, you wouldn't like it when I accosted you in Bond Street, beard in hand."

Miss Carew shuddered.

Then—

"Seriously, Jeremy, why shouldn't I have it off? Listen. First, it would suit me. I went to see Sali to-day, and he said it'd look immense. Secondly, it's the fashion. I don't want it bobbed, you know. I want it really well cut. Thirdly, I go through such hell—hell, morning and night. I wish you could see it down. Then perhaps you'd realise what I mean."

"I have," said Jeremy Broke. "The night of the Lyvedens' ball."

"Well, how would you like to have to cope with it twice a day?"

Jeremy inclined his head.

"I cannot imagine a greater privilege."

Eve smiled very charmingly.

"Let's drop hypothesis," she said, "and come back to facts. I've given you three good reasons for having it cut. Except that it's a national treasure, of which, I assume, I am the luckless trustee, can you give me one single reason why it should be preserved?"

Jeremy hesitated.

Then—

"No," he said quietly. "I can't."

There was a silence.

The man smiled thoughtfully, staring straight ahead. With a faint frown the girl regarded the leisurely disintegration of the logs in the grate. The distant throb of ragtime filtered into the room, only to subside, as though abashed, before the stately lecture of a Vulliamy clock.

"Let us talk," said Eve, "of the past."

"Good," said Jeremy. "I'll begin. If I'd been brought up to be a plumber, instead of a diplomat—"

"Oh, I wish you had," said Eve. "My bath's gone wrong again."

"What, not the Roman?"

"The same," said Eve.

"There you are," said Broke. "I told you not to have it. You cannot introduce a relic of the Stone Age into a super-flat. It can't be done. If you must have a circus leading out of your bedroom, the only thing to do is to set it right up and then build a house round it."

"We're off," said Eve, bubbling.

Jeremy swallowed.

"What's the trouble?" he demanded.

"Won't empty," said Eve. "I'm—I'm having it taken away."

"Taken away?" cried Broke.

"Well, filled in or something. I don't know what the process will be. I simply said it was to be washed out and an ordinary bath put in its place."

"Why on earth?"

"Because experience has shown me that your advice was good. Between you and me, it nearly always is—though why you keep on giving it me when I only chuck it away, Heaven only knows. I should have got mad months ago. I think you must be very—very strong, Jeremy. At least, I'm very conscious of being the—the weaker vessel."

"A most appropriate sensation."

Eve shot him a lightning glance.

Then—

"We were to talk of the past," she said quickly. "D'you remember this day a year ago?"

Jeremy knitted his brows.

"Was that the first time we met?"

"It was," said Eve. "May Day 1923. Here in this house. . . . Jeremy, I've a confession to make. I asked that you should be introduced to me."

"Well, I asked too."

"Why?"

"Because I wanted to know you," said Jeremy Broke.

"Why?"

"I suppose you attracted me."

"I must be attractive," said Eve.

"You are."

Miss Carew shrugged her white shoulders.

"I'm still unmarried," she said.

"That," said Jeremy Broke, "is your little fault. At least, Rumour has it that you've turned a good many down."

"Rumour is wrong," said Eve. "I admit I've had one or two overtures, but the idea of being married for my money never appealed to me."

"I shouldn't have thought," said Broke, "that you need be afraid. If you were forty, instead of twenty-four; if you had a face like the back of a hansom; if—"

"Here," said Eve. "Don't cut out the gilt. There was the making of a compliment. Besides, I value your opinion. What is my face like, Jeremy?"

The man regarded her.

"It's not like anything I've ever seen," he said.

"My mouth," said Eve, "is too large."

"No, it isn't," said Broke. "It's just



perfect. So's your nose, an'—an' the rest. That's why it seems so wicked to cut your hair."

"Was it my face that attracted you—last year?"

The man considered.

"Your face and your pretty ways."

"You just felt you wanted to know me?"

"Yes."

Eve sighed.

"Well, you've had your wish," she said.

"I mean, you've got to know me pretty well."

"You've been very sweet," said Jeremy.

"Don't mention it," said Miss Carew.

"It's—it's been a pleasure. Besides, I'm very lonely. And I wanted to know you, you know. . . . Never mind. I hope, when you're married——"

"I'm not engaged yet."

"That's your little fault," said Eve. "I could mention several ladies who have put their arms round your neck—certainly figuratively and, for all I know, literally."

"Rot"—incredulously.

"My dear, I've seen it going on. Don't be afraid—I'm not going to mention names."

"But I've no money."

"What does that matter? They have."

"I think you're mistaken," said Broke.

"Everyone's always very nice, but people don't pick up stray curs——"

"How dare you say such a thing?"

Eve was on her feet. Her brown eyes were flaming, and there was wrath in her voice.

Slowly Jeremy rose.

"My dear Eve——"

"How dare you speak like that? It's cheap and paltry and it's a wicked lie. D'you think I'd give my friendship to—to a stray cur?"

"You have," said Broke. "I've seen you. Down on the Portsmouth Road. His blood was all over your dress, and he died in your arms."

"Yes, but——"

"I'll take back 'cur,' if it offends you: but I'm a stray, Eve. I've nothing to offer at all. I can only just live. A plumber makes twice the money that they pay me. The jobs I was trained for are bust or sold or given to—to 'business men.' If it wasn't for Babel, I should be on the streets, and—— Oh, Eve, my lady, for God's sake don't cry. I didn't mean. . . ."

Instinctively he put out his arms, and the girl slipped into them. . . . He held her gently enough, comforting her, patting her shoulder, talking in steady tones of bygone

days and gilding the future with a laughing tongue. . . .

After a little, Eve had herself in hand.

As he released her——

"Let's—sit—down," she said jerkily.

They sat down together, and she slid an arm through his.

"Listen," she whispered. "I can't talk loud, because I shall cry if I do. Listen to me. I'll tell you the name of one woman who's put her arms round your neck. She's done it for nearly a year—not very glaringly until to-night. Her name's Eve. . . . Eve Malory Carew." His fists clenched, Jeremy sat like a rock. The girl continued tremulously. "I've given you opening after opening. I've put the very words into your mouth. I've given myself away. I've asked and pleaded and begged. I've done what I've never done in all my life, what I never dreamed I should do—sunk pride, vanity, self-respect. . . . to—make—you—speak. . . . I'm not good at 'the arts,' but I've used them all to-night. I gave you my profile, stared, tried to get my soul into my voice. I didn't cry to make you take me in your arms—that was a piece of sheer luck. But I did everything else. . . . Well, there you are. I've failed. And now I want to know one thing. There's only one answer you can give me, but from the way you give it I shall be able to tell if you're speaking the truth. Do you love me, Jeremy?"

The man laughed.

"You know I've been mad about you for just one year."

Eve sighed very happily.

"And I'm quite silly about you," she said. "I started dreaming about you months ago. But I think up to now I've behaved all right, haven't I?"

"Perfectly," said Broke.

Eve squeezed his arm.

"I'm glad of that. And now suppose you kissed me. Or d'you think I ought to kiss you?"

Suddenly she was in his arms, blushing and breathless.

"You witch," breathed the man. "You exquisite, glorious witch. I've steeled myself and fought a thousand times. And to-night I swore I'd see you—and kiss the rod. 'Rod'? Sword. It's been like a sword in my side to wait upon you. To-night was laden with memories, but I swore to come through. I swore I'd recall them. . . . and bow. . . . and come away—walk through the wet streets triumphant, because I'd flirted with fire and not been burned. And now



—I've failed." He lifted up his eyes with the look of one who is looking into heaven. "I shan't walk home, Eve. By rights I should slink, because I've broken my oath. But—I—shan't—slink. I think I shall dance, Eve . . . dance, leap, run . . . give silver to the beggars I meet . . . shout . . . because you love me . . . because of the stars in your eyes and the flower they call your mouth." Eve flung back her beautiful head and closed her eyes. The smile on her parted lips was not of this world. "You ask if I love you. I love the lisp of your footfalls and the print of your tiny feet. I love the rustle of your gown and the silence your laughter breaks. All that you do I love—because you do it . . . you . . . Eve . . . my princess. . ."

He kissed her lips.

"I'm very happy," said Eve. "I hope you are."

Broke picked her up in his arms.

"You wicked child," he said.

"Witch, princess, child," said Eve, with an arm round his neck. "Which will you marry?"

"The child," said Jeremy Broke.

"That's right," said Eve. "The others have served their turn. The stick to persuade you to jump: the sceptre to dazzle your vision." She fell to stroking his hair. "I'm really more of an artist than I thought. Looking back, I wonder I had the courage to be so indecent. Of course, I was desperate. Still. . ."

"It is the prerogative of royalty."

Eve made a maddening mouth.

"Diplomat!" she said. Then—"As a matter of fact, stacks of us do it all the time, darling. But I never thought I should."

\* \* \* \* \*

The two were married one brilliant June morning, full of the airs and graces of a belated spring. Broke received twelve presents, Miss Carew six hundred and four: such is the power of money. The former had already resigned his ghost of a job and was earning much less than a living by plying his pen. From this Eve sought to dissuade him, but the man was resolute. Marriage had brought him a livery more gorgeous than any he could win, but he would stand upon his own shoe-leather.

Jeremy Broke was thirty and of a cheerful countenance. His grey eyes were set well apart, and his forehead was broad. His nostrils were sensitive, his mouth firm and shapely, his thick brown hair well-ordered, his head carried high. He was tall, and his

shoulders were square. He had good hands, and cared for them as a man should. His manners were above reproach: his style, that of a gentleman. So were his instincts. . . .

He brought his wife no debts. He sold his great-grandfather's chronometer to pay such expenses of the wedding as are usually met by the groom; and, once married, that the money they spent was not his he made most evident. Friends, acquaintances, strangers, servants—none must credit him with Eve's wealth. He did not insist upon the truth—go about shouting 'It's hers': but the things that were Cæsar's unto Cæsar he scrupulously rendered. Most of all was he careful in private to assume no whit of that authority which riches give. He never stooped: but he never sat in her seat. It was impossible not to revere feeling so fine. His wife found it worshipful—with tears in her eyes.

Eve Malory Broke was a very striking example of the Creator's art. Her features were beautiful, and she was perfectly made. The curves of her neck and shoulders, her slender white wrists, her slim silk stockings and the shining arches of her feet—these and other points lifted her straight into the champion class. She was lithe of body and light as air in the dance. The grace of her form and movement were such as Praxiteles rejoiced to turn to stone. You would have said that only an etching-needle could catch her very delicate dignity—but for one thing. That was her colouring. Her great brown eyes and the red-gold splendour of her amazing hair, the warm rose of her cheeks and the cream of her exquisite skin—never was leaping vitality more brilliantly declared. Old Masters would have gone mad about her. Adam would have eaten out of her hand. In a word, she became her name.

A warm, impulsive nature, rich in high qualities and puny faults, made her a wife to be very proud of, to love to distraction and occasionally to oppose. . . .

After doing their best to spoil one another for nearly ten months, Eve and Jeremy had their first pitched battle in Rome one tearful April morning. . . .

"In other words," said the former silkily, "I can't carry my liquor."

"I never said or suggested such a thing. For all I know, you could drink me under the table."

"Then what's the point of your protest?"

Short-skirted, perched upright on a table,



her knees crossed, one admirable leg slowly swinging, her beautiful fingers drumming deliberately upon the table's edge, Eve was superb. If her wonderful hair had been about her shoulders, she might have sat to a Greuze and furnished gaping posterity with a new ideal.

Jeremy swallowed.

"I think it's a pity," he said, "deliberately to put off what so very few women have."

"What's that?"

"Your ladyship."

Eve raised her brown eyes to heaven.

"Because I drink two cocktails instead of one——"

"It's tough," said Jeremy. "It's a tough thing to do. A woman's supposed to drink, not because she likes it, but because it's the fashion or because she needs bucking up. Very well. It's the fashion to drink a cocktail before your dinner. To that fashion women subscribe—many, perhaps, cheerfully, but that's their business. If they make a meal of it—ask for a second helping—the assumption or fiction that they're following a fashion is gone and they're merely advertising an appetite which isn't particularly becoming to a man, but actually degrades a woman whoever she is."

"I'm much obliged," said Eve. "'Tough' and 'degraded.' I am a topper, aren't I? I suppose you realise that this is 1924."

"If you mean I'm old-fashioned, I admit it. I don't like to see a girl drink. But that's beside the point. I mayn't like the fashion, but I don't shout about it. You can't curse anyone for toeing the line. But I think it's a thousand pities to overstep it."

Eve smote upon the table with the flat of her pretty hand.

"You don't seem able to see," she cried, "that you're blowing a whole gale about nothing at all—*nothing*. Because there's a cocktail going spare and I'm fool enough to give it a home, d'you seriously suggest that I shall be branded as a sot? One swallow doesn't make a drunkard."

"That's better," said Jeremy, smiling. "That's the way to talk. And of course I don't, sweetheart. I'm not such a fool. But . . . You are so attractive, Eve, so—so dazzling, you set such a very high standard of sweetness that when you do something that brings us down to earth we've got such a long way to fall. A taste for liquor seems so much worse in you——"

"But I haven't a taste for liquor. I hate it. I don't care whether I drink a

cocktail or not. Yes, I do. I'd much rather drink water."

"I know you would," cried Broke; "but no one else does. And when, to put it plainly, you have a couple, then——"

"Everyone knows I don't drink."

"But you *do* . . . you *are* . . . you're inviting attention to the fact. Thoughtlessly, idly, of course. You don't care a curse about liquor: but by having a second cocktail you're declaring your liking for drink."

"I don't agree," said Eve, "but supposing I am. Why shouldn't I like my liquor?"

"I've tried to point out," said Jeremy wearily, "that a taste for liquor doesn't become you. But I think in your heart you know that. What you won't see is that to drink two cocktails is tough."

"I confess I can't," said Eve. "What's more, I propose to drink two more to-night."

"Look here," said Broke, deliberately ignoring the glove. "A little while ago it was the fashion to wear short skirts, wasn't it? Very well. You subscribed to the fashion and wore them too. Well, you wouldn't have exaggerated that fashion—turned out in a frock that only got as far as your knees, would you?"

"What d'you think?" said his wife.

"Well, some girls did."

"Some."

"Exactly," cried Broke. "And because they went beyond the dictates of Fashion, they were properly judged to be tough."

"That didn't make them tough. They were tough already, or they wouldn't 've done it."

Jeremy spread out his hands.

"Out of your own mouth . . ." he said.

"Only tough people do tough things; or, in other words, tough things are only done by tough people."

There was a moment's silence.

Then—

"Right oh," said Eve. "I'm tough. And just to leave no doubt upon the subject I'm going to drink two and probably three cocktails to-night. If as a result I get tight, it'll be your privilege to escort me upstairs and apply the usual restoratives. Really," she added, raising her delicate arms and stretching luxuriously, "it's a great thought that if I like to exceed I shall be properly cared for. A minute ago I was wondering why I'd married you, but at least a tame missionary has his points. Even if you do choke him off, it's his job to return good for evil."



Jeremy turned to the window.

"Are you trying," he said, "to get a rise?"

"No," said Eve calmly. "I never attempt to accomplish a *fait accompli*."

"Why d'you call me a mis-sioner and talk about choking me off? You know it's unfair and uncivil."

"I don't consider it unfair, and whether it's civil or not doesn't concern me."

"Then it should," said Broke shortly. "And in future I'll be glad if it does. I'm not rude to you, and I see no reason why you should be rude to me."

Eve laughed musically.

"You have been most of-

advise you to pull up your socks. Because it amuses me to let you hold the reins——"



"'I am a topper, aren't I? I suppose you realise that this is 1924?'"

fensive," she said. "Familiarity breeds contempt, I know. Still, one likes it to be veiled. At least, I do. You might make a note of that. And next time you feel impelled to review my manners . . ."

"Eve, Eve, why do you speak like this?"

"In the hope that you'll understand. If we're to continue to live together, I

Jeremy turned.

"You're determined to force my hand," he said quietly. "I beg that in future you will take only one cocktail before a meal."

Eve raised her eyebrows and sighed.

"Your request is refused," she said.

"Must I make it an order?"

Mrs. Broke stared.

"An order?" she said, rising.



"An order . . . which I shall enforce."

Jeremy watched the blood mount to the glorious temples, the exquisite lips tighten, the red glow of anger steal into the great brown eyes.

He continued evenly.

"I am determined that my wife shall not cheapen herself. I've entreated in vain; I've used argument, and it's failed; and so I must use—power."

"Power?" breathed the girl. "Power?"  
... When you

make enough money to pay your washing-bills . . ."

Jeremy stiffened suddenly and went very pale.

With a hammering heart, his wife stood still as death.

For a moment he spoke no word. Then—

"I'm going out," he said shortly. "Don't wait for lunch. I shan't be back till seven. I shall



"If you mean I'm old-fashioned, I admit it. I don't like to see a girl drink."



come back then—this time. But if ever you say such a thing again or anything like it, I shall walk right out for good."

He picked up his hat and coat and passed out of the room. . . .

Rome has much to offer. She offered much to Broke that April morning. But all he took was the aged Appian Way, tramping this steadily with an empty pipe between his teeth and the thin rain playing on his face. He had no eyes for his flank-guards, no thoughts for the pomp of traffic that had swept or stalked or stumbled over his present path to build a world. He was aware only of a proud, passionate face, angry, yet exquisite in anger—the face of a spoiled child.

Sixteen miles he covered before he returned to the hotel, hungry and healthily tired, but with a clear brain and steadfast heart.

He had been checking and weighing many things. He had reviewed his married life, faced the mistakes he had made and steeled himself to pay for every one of them. He had found himself wanting in patience, slow to make due allowance, visiting Eve with ills which his own shortcomings had begotten. More. The bill his heart had run up was truly formidable. To do his darling pleasure he had let everything rip for month after flashing month. He had smiled at this extravagance, abetted that whim, encouraged that vanity. They had drifted—gone as they pleased. The trivial round had been bought off; the common task compounded with. Discipline had become a dead letter; indulgence, lord of misrule. . . . And it was his fault. She was a child and—she had great possessions; so Life and Love had become two excellent games, effortless, fruitful. Indubitably it was his fault. He should have pointed the child, steadied her, used his experience. His failure was inexcusable, because he had been through the mill, seen that Life, at any rate, was no game—a stroll or a struggle, perhaps, according as Fate laid down, but not a game. The pity was they might have strolled so pleasantly. . . .

Jeremy had also reviewed the recent affray. He had decided that he had been clumsy, quick to anger and blunt. But he was perfectly certain, first, that his contention had been sound, and, secondly, that his withdrawal was wholly justified. Moreover, cost what it might, if ever again Eve laid such a whip across his shoulders, he would have to go. Had he been less punctilious,

had he ever given his wife the slightest cause, it would have been different. As it was, to condone such usage would be fatal. Her respect for him, his respect for himself, would rapidly bleed to death, and Happiness would shrivel like a fallen leaf. There would, in fact, be nothing at all to stay for—unless one cared for Love with his tongue in his cheek. . . .

That she had drawn such a whip had opened Broke's eyes. He had been hurt—naturally; but he was far more concerned. Ten months ago . . . Jeremy blamed himself very much indeed. He was, of course, most deeply in love with his wife. . . .

And she with him.

When he came in that evening she flung her arms round his neck and burst into tears.

"What do you think of me?" she wailed. "I must have been mad. You are so wonderful, Jeremy, so wonderfully sweet about it all; and then I take up your sweetness and slash you across the face. Jeremy boy, you've got a cad for a wife."

Jeremy kissed her hair.

"My lady," he said. "My darling."

Eve shook her glorious head.

"No," she said. "No lady. Don't call me that again. I've done the unspeakable thing. I know it. If you'd given me cause, it would've been the grossest form. But as things are. . . ." She drew away and passed a hand over her eyes. "I think I must be possessed, Jeremy. Of course I hadn't a leg—about the drinks, I mean. You were perfectly right. But I can mend that. I'll never touch a cocktail again as long as I live. But I can't mend the other."

"It's mended," said Jeremy, taking her hands in his. "I made you mad as a hornet. I didn't mean to, dear, but I'm clumsy, you know. Well, when you're mad, you just pick up the first brick. You don't care what it's made of or what it is. The point is it's something to heave."

Eve looked him in the face.

"There was a label on that brick—'NOT TO BE THROWN,'" she said. "We've all got two or three bricks labelled like that—'DO NOT TOUCH,' 'DANGEROUS.' . . . I think from what you said that brick is marked 'DANGEROUS' too."

Jeremy bowed his head.

"Yes."

"Jeremy," said Eve, "you've something I haven't got—thousands of things, of course, but especially one. And that's my respect."



Her husband smiled.

Then he extended his arms and brought her face to his chin.

"You've got mine, any way," he said.

"Rot."

Jeremy nodded solemnly.

"To tell you the truth," he said, "you never lost it. If you could have seen yourself. . . ."

"A sulky child," said Eve.

"No," said Broke. "A—a princess."

"That's not what you married."

"I know. But that was your fault. You went and gave me my choice."

A mischievous look stole into the big brown eyes.

"What a fool I was," said Eve and put up her mouth.

\* \* \* \* \*

If the Brokes had slid back for ten months, for the next six they went steadily forward, hand in hand. It was the strangest progress. Luxury, Idleness, Ease certainly came behind, but dutifully, as servants should. A jovial Discipline jogged by their side. Respect and Self-Respect marched solemnly ahead.

Jeremy did admirably.

Eve had never been mouthed—and she was twenty-six. She was worth twenty thousand pounds a year. Finally, she was American. . . .

With infinite patience, with gentleness, firmly her husband went to work—helping his wife, helping himself, helping his wife to help him and always giving her the glory. Eve gave it back always, with a look in her eyes that money cannot buy.

The vanities of a wicked world were against her, but her love and respect for Jeremy beat them back. She began to see the smile on Discipline's face, look for his cheerful wink, glow before his bluff praise.

One November morning Jeremy woke to find her fully dressed.

This was unusual. That one's fast should be broken in bed was one of the articles of Mrs. Broke's faith.

So soon as her husband could speak, he asked what was wrong.

After a while, a child told him her tale.

"You remember that poor man yesterday I gave half-a-crown to? Well, what's half-a-crown to me? It wasn't giving him anything really. I mean, I wasn't missing anything. It wasn't hurting me. So I thought if this morning I got up at seven o'clock. . . . It sounds silly, because it

hasn't done him any good. But he did have his half-crown, and I— Well, I'm glad I'm up now, but I do hope it was a deserving case, Jeremy. . . ."

Her husband slid out of bed and picked up her hand.

"I take my hat off," he said uncertainly.

And, as is so often the way, two days later the pretty pilgrims' progress came to a violent end.

It was a bleak afternoon, with a sky of concrete and a wind that cut like a lash.

Eve, who had been to the dressmaker's, was sitting before the fire, reflecting comfortably that in ten days' time she and Jeremy would be in the South of France.

Her husband entered quickly.

"Sorry I'm late, my darling, but when he'd finished with me he said he was going South, and I was fool enough to offer to drive him down. You know what these artists are. Five-and-twenty minutes he kept me waiting." He stooped and kissed her. "And—and I've a confession to make."

"Go on," said Eve, smiling.

"I've done it again, Eve."

"What?"

Jeremy stepped to the fire.

"Got stopped in the Park."

"Jeremy!"

"I'm awfully sorry, dear. It's a kind of disease with me."

"But you gave me your word—"

"I know. I'm frightfully sorry. I wasn't thinking about speed. As a matter of fact, I was talking to Hudibras. And then, just as I was going to switch out of Clarence Gate, they pulled me up. Perfectly ridiculous, of course. The road was clear."

"That's hardly the point," said Eve coldly.

"I know, I know." He paused. Then: "Of course, you'll think I'm mad, but—Eve, ten minutes later I did it again."

His wife sat up.

"Again?"

Jeremy swallowed.

"Again," he said uncomfortably. "Down Constitution Hill. I tell you, Eve, I could hardly believe my eyes. Just as I got to the Palace, out they stepped. Thirty-three miles an hour. They're perfectly right."

"And you promised to keep to twenty."

"I know. I'm frightfully sorry. It just shows—"

Eve laughed.

"It shows you don't care a bean. I've



begged and prayed you just for my sake to go slow. You know why. Because I'm worried to death when you're out alone. You know it. . . Over and over again you've given your word."

Jeremy stared upon the floor.

"I'll give up driving," he said.

"I don't care what you do. The damage is done. I begged, you swore, and now you've broken your word. If the police hadn't stopped you, I should never have known. The obvious inference is that you're breaking it all the time."

"I haven't really, Eve. I've crawled about. But to-day I got talking, and——"

"Why," said Eve, "should I believe you? What does it matter whether I do or not? Day in, day out I try to do what you want. I'm sick and tired of trying to do your will. Yet I keep on because it amuses you—amuses you to see me cramp my style. Heaven knows why. It's a funny form of love. But that's by the way. I try. I sweat and grunt and slave—for peace in our time. . . . And you stand over me and keep my nose to the stone. . . . I'm not like that. It wouldn't amuse me to put you through the hoop. Only one wretched favour I've ever asked: and that I asked because I loved you."

"I know," said Broke. "I'm sorry. I've no excuse. But don't lay on so hard, Eve. You know it doesn't amuse me to——"

"Then why do you do it?" said Eve. "Don't say 'Out of love,' or I shall burst."

"I do what I do," said Broke, "because I want you to get the most out of Life."

"Oh, let us pray."

Jeremy bit his lip.

"You do it," continued his wife, "to assert your authority. If the money was yours and not mine, you'd have the whip hand. As it isn't, you play the priest, trade on my better feelings, take advantage of my love—I didn't marry you for that, you know."

"You will please," said Jeremy, "take that back at once."

His wife stared.

"You're out for trouble," she said. "Well, here it is—hot and strong. I said I didn't marry you for that. Well, I don't pay you for that, either."

Without a word, Jeremy left the room.

Ten minutes later he passed out of the house.

\* \* \* \* \*

For month after halting month Eve carried on. The girl hoped desperately that Jeremy

would return. If he did, he should find her soul swept and garnished. She dressed soberly, spent so much and no more, rose always at eight. She kept the same state, but entertained the less fortunate, was always lending her cars. When she saw some object she fancied, she asked the price and gave the amount to charity. Herein she was scrupulous. A Chinchilla coat attracted her very much. Still, her sables were perfect. Besides. . . . After careful reflection she decided that but for Jeremy's teaching she would have bought the fur and wrote a cheque for the sick for four hundred pounds.

She made no search for her husband—not because she was proud, but because she felt that it was vain. If he was coming he would come. If he was not. . . . Had she stumbled across him, she would have begged and prayed. But look she would not. She had no doubt at all that she was up against Fate. And Jeremy had always said that Fate didn't like you to try to force his hand. 'So sure as you do, my lady, you lose your labour.'

She often wondered why she had lost her head that bitter afternoon. After all, to exceed a limit was not a grave offence. He was careful in traffic, no doubt: and then, slipping into the Park, he hurried along. Besides, he was only hastening back to her. . . . And he had been so humble.

Eve decided that she had been possessed. Some malignant devil had entered into her soul, distorting truth, ranting of motes and beams, raising a false resentment of a fictitious injury.

To say that she missed him is to call Leviathan a fish. Only the fetish that she must do his will saved her alive. The night of his going she lifted up her head, shook the tears from her eyes and answered two letters that she had left too long. . . .

And now four months had gone by. . . .

Sitting before the fire, Eve thought of the past with blank, see-nothing eyes. For the millionth time she wondered where Jeremy was, how he was faring, what he was doing to live. Never had riches seemed so empty, luxury so drear as they had seemed since she had been alone. The thought that, as like as not, he was going hungry tore at her heart. . . .

She picked up the paper to try to distract her thoughts.

Staring straight at her was the advertisement of *The St. James's Review*. This was announcing the contents of the current issue. Third on the list was:



*BABEL . . . . Jeremy Broke.*

A child fell upon the telephone. . . .

A sub-editor or someone was speaking.

"I'm afraid we're not at liberty to give his address, but if you write him a letter care of this office, it will be sent on at once."

"All right," said Eve. "Thank you."

A child's letter went off by messenger within half an hour.

*My darling Jeremy,*

*I would like to come to you if you will tell me where you are. I have tried very hard to do what you would have liked ever since you went, and if you had been here I should have been very happy. Please let me come, because, if you don't, I don't think I shall be able to go on. I would try, of course, but I think I should break. I've tried to write calmly, darling, but I shall be very glad to hear as soon as you can. Oh, Jeremy, my precious, I suppose you couldn't wire.*

*Your very loving*  
*Eve.*

No sooner had the letter been dispatched than a terror that it would miscarry flung into Eve's heart. She saw it being mislaid, forgotten, left to join the faded habitués of some dusty mantelpiece. Of course she should have marked it '*Important*,' enclosed it in a note to the editor saying how serious it was, asking for it to be expressed or sent by hand. Then, at least, he would have taken action. Besides, it *was* serious—desperately so: and urgent—most urgent. Yet she had done nothing to accelerate a reply—*nothing*. What a fool she was! She had certainly asked him to wire, but why not to telephone? If the letter had gone to him by hand and he were to have telephoned. . . .

The tide of apprehensive impatience rose to an intolerable height. . . .

Eve rose to her feet and stood twisting her fingers.

After a moment, trembling a little, she stepped to the telephone. . . .

"Oh, I rang up a little while ago and asked for Mr. Broke's address—Mr. Jeremy Broke. And you said—I think I spoke to you—you said that if I sent a letter—"

"Yes, I remember."

"Well, I've just sent you a letter by hand, but I ought to have marked it '*Important*' and—and . . . Well, I really should have enclosed it in a note to you because it's very urgent, and I would like it sent on by messenger-boy if you could do

it. At once—to-night, I mean. You sec——"

"I don't think he's in London. Wait a minute." The voice became almost inaudible. Frantically Eve strained her ears. . . . "Broke. Jeremy 'Broke—fellow that wrote *Babel* . . . messenger-boy. . . . Rome, isn't it? Poste Restante, Rome. . . ." The voice returned to the mouthpiece. "No. I'm afraid—Hullo! Are you there? . . . Hullo . . . Hullo . . ."

After a moment or two the speaker replaced his receiver with a sigh.

"Cut off," he said wearily. "Never mind. She'll ring up again."

He was quite wrong.

He had had his last conversation with Mrs. Broke.

The latter was already preparing to leave for Italy. . . .

Two days later the lady had reached Rome and was being rapidly driven to the Ritz Hotel. Purposely she avoided the Grand, where she and Jeremy had stayed—centuries ago.

She passed into the hall and up to the polished bureau.

The reception-clerk was busy—speaking into the telephone.

"*Oui, madame . . . Parfaitement. . . . Jusqu'à samedi prochain les deux, et après samedi les trois avec un salon en suite. . . . C'est entendu, madame. . . . Merci.*"

He left the instrument, stooped to make an entry and turned with an apology to Eve.

"Hullo, Jeremy," said his wife.

\* \* \* \* \*

At half-past eight that evening Jeremy Broke, Gentleman, entered the Grand Hotel and sent up his name.

His head was aching, and he felt rather tired.

He wondered dully what this dinner with Eve would bring forth. The great gulf fixed between them seemed exceeding wide: everything was insisting upon its width. Not since the day on which he had left her house had he been used as a gentleman: now he was treated with respect—which her wealth had induced. A page she would presently tip was dancing attendance; here was the pomp of a salon which she had purchased; there was champagne waiting for which she would pay. . . .

As the door closed behind him, another was opened, and Eve in a plain black frock came into the room.

"Oh, Jeremy."



He went to her quickly and kissed her hands and lips.

The big brown eyes searched his steadily.

He smiled back. . . .

"What is it, Jeremy? Why are you playing up?"

Jeremy dropped her fingers and turned away.

"The burnt child," he said slowly, "dreads the fire."

"Are you sorry I came?"

"Oh, Eve."

He drew in his breath sharply, hesitated and fell to playing with his moustache. . . .

Dinner was served.

The meal did much for both of them, as meals can. Jeremy's headache passed, and Eve was refreshed. The flesh being fortified, the spirit lifted up its head.

By the time the servants had withdrawn they were exchanging news with zest. . . .

"So, really," concluded Jeremy, settling himself in a chair, "I've—I've done very well. It's a most entertaining job—smoothing down the indignant, humouring the whimsical, bluffing the undesirable, assisting the helpless, shepherding the vague. . . . I never had the faintest idea how many remarkable people are floating around. We had a fellow one day who stayed for six weeks. He went to bed when he arrived and he never got up. For six solid weeks he stayed in his bed. Nothing the matter with him. No suggestion of ill health. It was just his way of life. He did it wherever he went. Chauffeur and valet kicking their heels all day. He wouldn't have the valet in his room except to shave him. Said he didn't like his face. Then one day he got up and left for Naples. . . . I got off once—with an old English lady. She had a courier and two maids and travelled her own bath. She used to be ringing me up the whole day long, and she never went out or came in without speaking to me. It was most embarrassing. She gave me a cheque, when she left, for a hundred pounds. I tore it up, of course. . . ."

"You would," said Eve.

"Well, I couldn't take money like that."

"Plenty of people do."

"Yes, but . . ."

Eve leaned forward.

"She wanted you to have it, Jeremy. She was rich, and it gave her pleasure to spend her money like that. Your conscience was clear."

Jeremy shifted in his chair.

"It wouldn't 've been," he said, "if I'd frozen on to it."

"Why not?"

"Because I didn't deserve it."

"Wasn't that a matter for her?"

The man hesitated. Then—

"I just couldn't take it," he said.

"Because it was a tip?"

"Oh, no. If it had been a fiver—well, I suppose I'd been attentive and I've no false pride."

"Then why," said Eve, "why did you turn it down?"

Jeremy laughed.

"I'm hanged if I know," he said. "But it couldn't be done."

Eve lay back in her chair and crossed her legs.

"Shall I tell you?" she said. "Because you're a gentleman. You thought she'd lost her head—she probably had; and you weren't going to take advantage of a runaway heart. . . . That hundred pounds was Cæsar's: you rendered it whence it came."

Broke got upon his feet and turned to the mantelpiece.

Presently he took out a pipe and a well-worn pouch.

"I suppose you're right," he said slowly.

After a long look Eve lowered her eyes to the floor.

"You got off once before, Jeremy—nearly three years ago now."

"Yes," said Jeremy, pressing tobacco home.

"Did you think I'd lost my head?"

"No."

"Or that to take my money would be taking advantage of my heart?"

"No."

"Yet you rendered it to Cæsar—every cent." She leapt to her feet and caught the lapels of his coat. "Every rotten cent that the good God had given us to make us happy you rendered unto Cæsar, as though it were Cæsar's. *And it wasn't Cæsar's*, Jeremy. It was ours—yours and mine. . . ." Her voice broke, and the tears came into her eyes. "I was so happy, dear, to think I was rich, because I felt I'd got something worth sharing—which you would share. I was so proud and happy. . . . And then—you—wouldn't share—it. . . . Well, at first I was dismayed, as children are. You married a child, you know. . . . I tell you, I was ready to cry for disappointment. And then, suddenly, I saw something very magnificent



—unearthly handsome, Jeremy, in your refusal. It was something so bright and shining that I couldn't think of anything else. I found you were paying me a compliment for all the world to see such as no woman with money had ever been paid before. . . . Well, I'm vain. And the childish impulse to burst into tears was swallowed up in pride to think that I had for my husband so fine a gentleman. I found it so flattering, Jeremy : I was just drunk with vanity. And so I became a princess—you made me one, dear : and the child that you married disappeared . . . . And with the child disappeared the idea of sharing—a princess doesn't share. That it was *our* money never occurred to me again. I had no eyes for such an idea. Every hour of every day you showed me that it was *mine*. And I came to prize its possession because it had brought me this superb allegiance. I sank to be a queen, Jeremy : and dragged you down to be the keeper of my purse . . . you . . . And then a day came when the queen became imperious—high with her faithful servant . . . thought him presumptuous . . . rose in the dignity he'd given her and asked who paid him to keep the privy purse." There was a long silence. Presently Eve went on. "And then a strange thing happened. You went, of course. But so did the queen, Jeremy. So did the pride and vanity and all the false position you had built up. And if you could have seen what was left, you'd 've seen a child crying—because it had no playmate to share its pretty toys. . . . I say the false position *you* had built up. Jeremy lad, it's true. I let you build it, of course. I gave you the bricks. If I hadn't been so vain—so hellishly vain, I'd 've caught your arm at the beginning and stopped the rot. You built so faithfully, Jeremy—with the cleanest, honestest heart. And I watched you and let you build and thought how wonderful it was. And all the time you were rendering our happiness to Cæsar. He's had four months of it already, four long, matchless months out of our little treasure. Oh, Jeremy, Jeremy, you're not going to give him any more ?"

Jeremy caught her to him and held her close.

"My eloquent darling," he said, with his cheek against hers. "But you've forgotten my sex. A man——"

"You'd 've married me if I'd been poor ?"

"You know I would."

"It was because I was rich that you wouldn't speak ?"

"Yes."

"It was the child you wanted to play with—not her toys ?"

"Yes."

"Why, then your honour is clean. And it'll always be clean—so long as you'd play with the child if she had no toys. . . . You wouldn't want me to throw my toys away—I've always had them to play with. Yet how d'you think I feel when the child I've picked to be my playfellow won't share my pretty toys ?"

"I wonder," said Jeremy slowly, "I wonder whether you're right. 'Unto Cæsar.' You mean I've been paying conscience money—which I never owed ?"

Eve nodded.

The man put her gently aside and began to pace the room.

Slight fingers to mouth, Eve watched him, as one watches the flow of a crisis which one is powerless to treat. Her face was calm, and she stood like statuary : only the rise and fall of her breast betrayed her hammering heart. Her brain was straining frantically to perceive the line she would have to take. She had moved him—shaken him plainly. Everything in the world was depending on how she handled the next thing Jeremy said. . . .

Suddenly he swung round.

"Eve, if I come back, my livelihood's gone. And I mayn't be quite so lucky . . . another time."

His wife stood up.

"You go too fast, Jeremy. I've suffered, you know—most terribly. And I can't go through it again." She hesitated. "Before you come back, you must promise . . . to play with my toys."

For a long minute Jeremy stood regarding his wife.

Then suddenly he smiled—the smile of a man who has suddenly come upon the truth.

He stepped to Eve and put his arms about her.

"What a fool I've been," he said. "What a blinking, blear-eyed fool. Of course, it's partly your fault. You gave me my choice when you had no choice to give."

"What do you mean, Jeremy ?"

"You asked me which I would marry—the child or the witch or the princess. Well, I couldn't pick and choose. I had to marry the three—or none at all."

"But——"

"Listen. When you're a child, I'll play with your pretty toys : when you're a witch,



I'll—I'll play with your beautiful hair : and  
when you're a princess. . . ."

"Yes, yes"—eagerly.

"Why, then," said Jeremy proudly, "I'll  
play the prince."

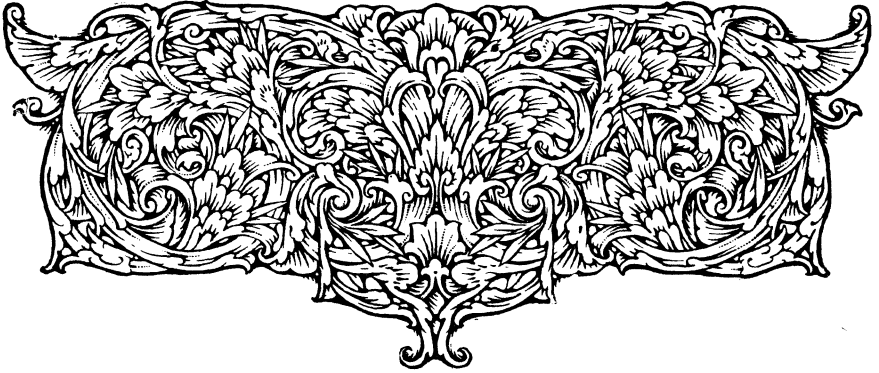
A glorious smile swept into his darling's  
face.

"And they lived happily," she breathed.

Jeremy nodded.

"Ever after," he whispered.

*Another complete story by Dornford Yates will appear in the  
next number.*



## GOOD MORROW, DEAR!

**G**OOD morrow, Love I used to know!  
And are you best and sweetest yet?  
Along the road you bade me go  
So many joyous things I've met.  
It's I have been by Avalon,  
And tasted golden fruit thereon—  
But do you care?  
My feet have found your door again—  
Love, are you there?  
And do you know me, calling here  
Good morrow, dear?

The lilac fragrance drifted by  
That dusk of Spring and young desire  
When "Love," you said, "nor smile nor cry,  
But kiss and leave me, lest we tire."  
The lilac whispers by the gate,  
"Who goes too soon returns too late!"  
But still I dare.  
My feet have found your door again—  
Love, are you there?  
Or must I linger, knocking, here,  
Unanswered, dear?

ANNE PAGE.



# MIND OVER MATTER IN GOLF

SEEING EACH SHOT BEFORE YOU PLAY IT  
DEDUCTIONS DRAWN FROM A CHAT WITH  
EDWARD RAY

*Ex-Open Champion*

By CLYDE FOSTER

*Illustrated from action-photographs of Edward Ray by Sport & General*

THE old caddie who is credited with having said to the late Andrew Lang, "Ye may be able to write books, but it takes a man wi' a heid to play gouf," spoke a greater truth than he knew—that is, if such a remark were ever made. Even if it were not, it would have been well worth making.

Among the rank and file of golfers thousands are met with who are haunted with the wish that they could reproduce their best golf at any time. They have recollections of wonderful tee shots, made with perfect ease, when the ball travelled straight and far in the most approved manner, with a minimum of effort, the impact being scarcely felt. Similarly, shots through the greens and iron and mashie approaches can be recalled which leave the player wondering at his inability to perform them with anything like consistency.

In a conversation with Edward Ray, the part played by the mind in the making of a shot was discussed very thoroughly. Ray frankly admitted that this aspect of golf did not receive as much attention as it deserved. He was well aware that, all things being equal—presupposing a certain knowledge of the rudiments of the game—the importance of confidently foreseeing the character of a shot, while addressing the ball, could hardly be overrated.

"Even with the best of us," said Ray, "it is always necessary to keep the mind riveted on one's game. In a certain sense the professional, who has played golf since his caddying days, may be said to play like a machine or from mere habit. But that does

not express the whole truth. You have only to consider the amazingly rapid progress made by the Americans at the game, and to watch their concentration on every shot, however apparently easy, to feel that their advancement is mainly due to a sort of 'Couéism' which they bring to bear on their play. There is a great deal to be said for applying the principles of 'Couéism' to golf—'shot by shot, in every way I am playing better and better.'"

The great danger to guard against, in Ray's opinion, was that of letting the mind wander. This might take the simple form of wondering and doubting what the shot was going to be like, half wishing that it were over, so that the worst might be past. It was peculiarly interesting to hear Ray lay down the law, for the learner and the advanced golfer alike, that the surest cure for this common failing was not only to fix the mind upon the spot aimed for in each shot, but also to foresee the manner in which the ball would travel. When this was done, the player would invariably have the satisfaction of making a good shot; anyhow, he would be conscious of a distinct improvement in his game.

I had somewhere read that Ray's theory of teaching golf amounted to this, as applied to long shots through the green: "Keep your head down and hit for all you are worth."

When I asked him about this, he smiled and said that he had no recollection of saying such a thing, but there was no reason why a remark of the kind should not have fallen from him in certain cases where it would have been sound advice. No two pupils



were alike, and the professional, in giving a lesson, had to adapt his teaching to the case in hand. Keeping the head down was one of the basic principles in golf. But the head could be kept down too long, with the result that a certain stiffness of the shoulders interfered with, and imparted a jerkiness to, the shot. It was still, however, true that much more mischief was wrought by lifting the head too soon than by keeping it down too long. He had known players, and good ones, who scarcely concerned themselves with watching the flight, so intent were they on keeping the eye, and the mind's eye, on



ADDRESSING THE BALL.—DOWNHILL LIE.

*The stance is quite open. Ray says the club-head should be sent down the sloping ground, when the ball will be cleanly picked up.*



ADDRESSING THE BALL FOR A PULL.

*The club-head is laid almost opposite the right heel, so that on impact the right shoulder shall be swung round after the shot.*

the ball and the movement of the club-head.

It was a beautiful spring morning, and Ray was in the best of spirits. Returning to his workshop, he brought back a brassie, with which he proceeded to demonstrate the force of what he had been saying. Placing the ball on a hanging lie, the powerful golfer showed how the shot should be made in accordance with requirements. This type of shot is a bugbear to thousands, but to see Ray make it left one wondering why it should ever cause any anxiety to golfers of any reasonable handicap.

"Now," said Ray, "I make up my mind



whether the shot has to be a low one or a high one. In each case the club-head must be swept down the slope on which the ball is resting, and when the mind is thoroughly made up as to the character of the shot, there is hardly any need to trouble very much about the position of the feet.

"When an idea has taken firm possession of the brain, other things seem naturally to fall into their place. One stands a little behind the ball with the hands a little in front. But anyone, without being told to observe these things, would nearly always take up the position referred to.

"It passes my comprehension—and I could never attempt to explain it—how the thought in the mind is transferred to the shot. Let anyone make an experiment on the lines I am laying down, without being put off by an occasional failure, and I think he will come to the conclusion that the phrase 'Mind over matter' has a very significant bearing on the game of golf."

We fell to talking about the high tees, varying from five to fifteen inches, employed with such wonderful success by Major Gillies. So far from speaking contemptuously of this innovation, which many dismissed as mere faddishness, Ray acknowledged that there was something to be said for it. He did not, of course, contemplate adopting the Gillies tees himself, as length was not one of his personal requirements. He told me that when a boy, in the Channel Islands, he often amused himself by driving balls from the outer branches of bushes for the fun of seeing how high he could lift them.

That was a good training for the eye, Ray imagined, remarking that it mattered very little where a ball lay, so long as it lay clear, and you could stand well and swing freely in addressing it. "Think how often," he said, "one finds himself forced to lift one foot much higher than the other, while yet a real good shot is made either with a wooden or an iron club. What does that mean, if it does not mean this—that concentration on the ball completely masters the situation?"

We walked over to a tee, and Ray helped

himself to a quantity of sand from the box. He had no Gillies tees available, The only thing to do was to build a colossal pyramid of sand and lay the ball on top of it. This he did, laughing. He said he did not expect to make a good shot at the first attempt, but he made one notwithstanding. The ball was addressed as its elevated position necessitated. Ray almost stood erect as he carefully calculated the line in the



PRACTICE FROM HIGH TEES, FOR A PULL WHICH EDWARD RAY THOROUGHLY EXEMPLIFIED.

*"If I practised high tees," says Ray, "I don't know how far I should drive."*

air along which the club must travel. There was no laying of the club-head down behind the ball, as in the case of an ordinary low tee. It seemed that the ball would be more difficult to hit cleanly. But I could not say that Ray made any longer address than usual. He certainly did not waggle half as many times as his friend over the way at Moor Park, Sandy



Herd, does habitually in normal circumstances.

As I looked on, wondering what would happen, I noted the expression on Ray's face. He did not look in the least fierce or in any way distort his features, but there was a quiet and unmistakable resolution in his pose. I knew that no other thought but one had possession of his mind. I also knew that, although he had admitted the

what he called the "felling" of it, bringing the ball to the ground fifty yards in front of him, to run on for an unconscionable distance. He nominated the character of every shot, and fulfilled his own forecast with wonderful consistency.

I came away from that demonstration and general chat with one impression paramount, namely, that golfers as a class, especially such as are no longer young,



STANCE AND GRIP ON THE UPWARD SWING.

*The club is taken back as far as the left arm can go, so that the leverage may be increased.*

possibility of an unsuccessful first attempt, he had none the less banished from his mind all fear of failure. Despite the abnormally high tee on which the ball waited to be dispatched, Ray was only concerned with hitting it, and that presented no real difficulty to his trained mind's eye.

He played seven or eight shots, some of them low, some of them high, pulled, or sliced, and only in one case, when trying a low ball against the wind, did he overdo

would derive infinitely more pleasure from the game, and perform immeasurably better, if the value of concentration were more fully realised.

Had I been a pupil seeking a lesson, and Ray had put me through all the orthodox directions, it is just possible that some mental confusion might have been the upshot. To be sure, instruction in golf is absolutely indispensable, and the sooner the better, because bad habits once formed are



not easily got rid of. But I did not go to Ray for a lesson, although I am certain that what he had said and done amounted to a very useful lesson indeed. He eliminated so many details.

Leaving myself out of the question, however, except in so far as I make deductions from Ray's demonstrations, I think there will hardly be two opinions regarding the part played by the brain in this tantalising game of golf.

There are, of course, golfers, and very many of them, who are not tortured by any unavailing ambition to reduce their handi-



TAKING THE CLUB-HEAD BACK.

*Both knees are bending. Ray's contention is that the right leg should not be stiffened at the top of the swing, as that would impart jerkiness to the shot.*



A SHOT FROM A TEE NINE INCHES HIGH.

*Ray's remark on taking up his stance was: "I don't care what the height of the tee is. My concern is with the ball. I keep my mind on it and hit it."*

caps. It is enough for them—and their position is not unenviable—to enjoy a round with one, two, or three friends, making jokes all the way, and openly rejoicing at bad shots made by an opponent or laughing at bad shots made by themselves.

Golf is a great health-giving recreation, and no one would quarrel with men who play the game for the good they get out of it, content to carry long handicaps with or without credit to themselves. Such men as these are found in great numbers in every club, and they are generally the jolliest fellows among us.

But what about golfers who are consumed with an ambition to improve their game, perhaps to come down to scratch? Theirs is a different case. Assume that they know, as very likely they do, all that any



professional can tell them about the way in which any sort of shot should be made. They have taken lessons at intervals for years, and have read extensively instructional books on the game. Yet somehow progress (downwards) is very slow. Having reached single figures, the most they can hope for is to take an occasional stroke off their handicaps by an exceptionally good round in a monthly competition, which brings them under the notice of the handicapping committee, to be duly flattered for their pains.

Not unlikely for some time afterwards they fail to play to their new handicap, and begin to despair of further improvement. The chronic stage seems for them to have been reached. Is there any specific to suit their case? Can anything be done for men who know all there is to know about the game—men who have consulted golf specialists wherever they have played, annexing a little here and a little there, until their style has become a sort of miscellaneous collection with a minimum of themselves in it?

One wonders whether Edward Ray's strong views on playing golf with your head, foreseeing every shot and the character of it while addressing the ball, thoroughly believing in your ability to reproduce any good shot hitherto made, would not go far to produce the desired results. Ray's specific is well worth bearing in mind. I give it as nearly as I can in his own words—

"Tell yourself what sort of shot you want to make, and tell yourself you can make it. It is ten to one you will."

When the subject of brains in golf is discussed in a company of golfers, someone is sure to ask what brand of brains it is that goes to the making of a good golfer. The question is not easily answered, beyond saying that it seems to be a confident kind of brain, almost a cocksure kind of brain, that takes the player up to a ball with a certain contempt for the little thing, and absolutely nothing in the nature of ball fright. There are caddies in the country to-day who will be open champions soon. They will play golf—as some of them are already doing—with celebrated men in all walks of life, and they will play so well as to leave the celebrities puzzled to know what brand of brains the caddies possess. They may even go so far as to ask whether golf requires any special brains at all.

The conclusion of the whole matter, if my deductions are right, is that some of us talk about concentration who have a very inadequate idea either of what it means or what its capabilities are. Perhaps, after all, the caddie quoted at the beginning of this article was right when he said that it took a man with a "heid" to play golf. But he was only right in the sense that the "heid" referred to was one that can think of golf and golf only, to the entire exclusion of everything else, a "heid" that possibly is under no great obligation ever to think of anything else.

When the ordinary amateur can annex a fair proportion of this golf "heid," he will have proved the soundness of Edward Ray's mental specific.

## SONG.

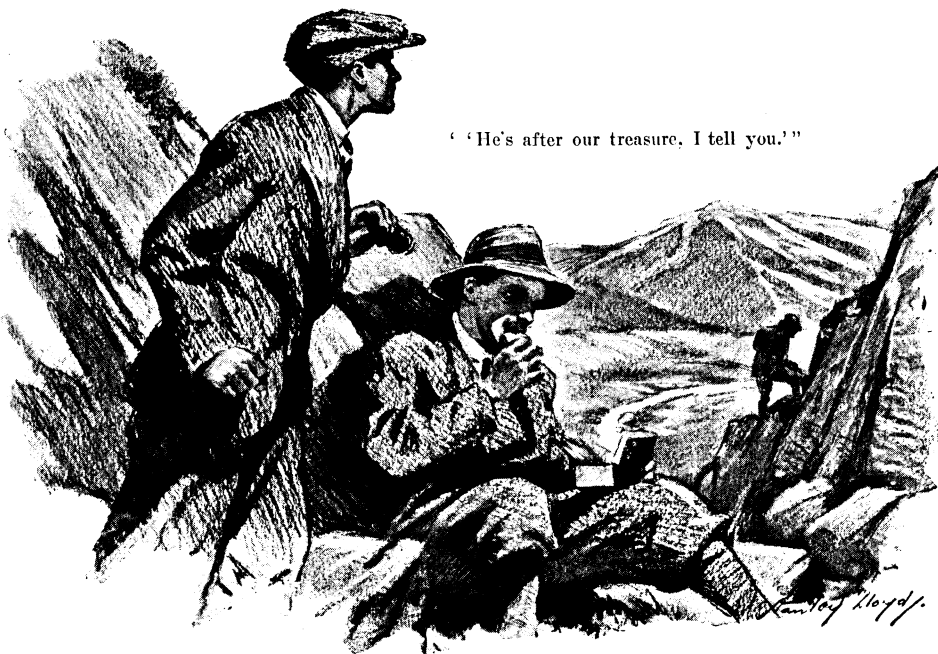
**O**H, green, green the tree is,  
And happy the sun,  
And here's song for singing  
That was never begun:

"Pleasant the world is,  
And gay are the bow'rs,  
And you love and I love,  
And all shall be ours.

"Pleasant the world is,  
And glad, glad the day,  
And you love and I love,  
And shall love away."

Oh, green, green the tree is,  
And happy the sun,  
And here's song for singing  
That shall never be done.





‘He’s after our treasure, I tell you.’

# TREASURE TROVE

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

“**I** TELL you there’s no doubt about it,” said Roche angrily, as he laid aside the binoculars. “He’s got a pickaxe, for one thing.”

Mowbray rejected the glasses with a gesture and, sitting down deliberately with his back against the sunny side of the big rock, opened his sandwich-case. “Man’s got as much right to be here as we have,” he dogmatised equably. “Besides, we don’t know whether he is after it at all. May be a shepherd, for all we know.”

“With a pickaxe?”

“Sure it isn’t a crook?”

“Poppycock. He’s after our treasure, I tell you.”

Mowbray finished his sandwich before replying. “My dear Roche, you seem incapable of realising that we are not the only strangers in the district. You have got Bec-les-Bains, with three big hotels and, I suppose, five hundred trippers, not five miles off; you have got motor-charabancs

passing along the Toulouse road twice a day; you have got——”

“All that doesn’t alter the fact that a man poking about among the rocks in a valley no one ever comes to is after something.”

“But why our particular something? Why shouldn’t he be just simply bug-hunting? Or taking a constitutional? Or training for a prize-fight? Or prospecting for oil? Or almost anything, really? How did he come to hear of the treasure, anyway? I thought we were the only people who knew about it. You take things too seriously, my son.”

“Too seriously!” Roche shook his head furiously. “It means something to me.”

Mowbray devoted himself to his flask of brown sherry. “So it does to me, if it comes to that. But I’m not losing any sleep over it. You have got to remember that we are about the millionth exploring



party that has gone in for this sort of treasure-hunting, and if we pull it off, it will be about the first time anyone ever did, outside the story-books."

"If you feel like that, why did you come in with me?"

"Why not? It's a jolly good sort of holiday, with the sporting interest thrown in. Personally, if it wasn't for you, I can't say it would break my heart if we didn't find anything. I get all the fun I want looking for it."

One of the most irksome incidentals to poverty is the inadvisability of losing your temper with those who deign to finance you. Roche had had his full share of poverty. Since the War he had known little else, and he realised bitterly enough that he could not afford to lose his temper even with so intimate a comrade as was Arthur Mowbray. Certainly, barring friendship, Mowbray would never have put up the necessary capital for their present adventure, the more that he was himself anything but a rich man. No ordinary capitalist would have considered for a moment spending even a couple of hundred pounds on the faith of such a story as that of the Marquis de la Roche-Metillac's lost diamonds, hidden more than a century ago in a lonely Pyrenean valley. Nobody realised it better than Roche himself, implicitly as he believed the story. On the other hand, to a man of his eager Celtic temperament, nothing could be more exasperating than his friend's placid nature, his amiable readiness to do all that could be expected of him, combined with an equally amiable cynicism as to the result of their efforts. Fifty times Roche had been tempted to break with him, had it not been clamantly impossible. Mowbray had already sunk his money—more money than he could comfortably afford—in the adventure. He displayed no resentment at whatever calls might be made upon either his purse or his muscular endurance. The most maddening part of him was that it was altogether impossible to quarrel with him.

"If you feel like that," burst out Roche, tried almost beyond endurance, "I wish to goodness——"

Mowbray, regretfully munching his last sandwich, yet managed to shrug his shoulders resignedly. "While you are trying to quarrel with me, the villain of the piece has probably found the treasure and gone off with it." He rose to his feet, stretched himself luxuriously, and glanced round the edge of the big rock which concealed them

from the opposite hillside. "No, by Jove, he hasn't! He is going up our own particular gully."

"What did I tell you?" Roche snatched at the binoculars. "He is following the bed of the stream, just where the cave ought to be. He is looking about. I'm going to ask him what he means by queering our pitch."

From their own side of the narrow, rocky valley it was evident enough, firstly, that the stranger was no shepherd, and, secondly, that he was undeniably looking for something among the rocks. He was dressed in the clothes of the average townsman, of French, indeed, rather than British suggestion. He wore a Panama hat, which concealed his face, and he carried a small pick, which he occasionally used to lever up rocks which were too heavy to be moved by hand alone.

"Stop a bit, you incredible ass!" cried Mowbray, moved out of his habitual calm by such a proposal. "You aren't in the trenches now, you know. You can't attack a perfect stranger like that without some kind of an excuse. I tell you the man is a geologist or something. Here, listen to reason. Granting this is the valley we are looking for——"

"Of course it is. What else can it be?"

"But is it? According to the letter, it is in the little valley up which someone used to drive the cattle from the old château to the summer pastures. You have admitted yourself that there are at least half a dozen that answer that description."

"Haven't we tried all the others?"

"So my legs tell me," agreed Mowbray feelingly. "But even granted this is the place, why should our friend down there be looking for the treasure, anyway? You told me that the old boy's letter to his wife had been between the leaves of a book that had been kept in an old box for well over a century without anyone knowing a word about it. How the goodness——"

"Doesn't follow a bit. The Marquis may have kept a copy of the letter, or he may have told the secret to an old servant who handed it down to his children. I tell you what, old man, there is one good thing about it. The very fact that someone else is after it is a pretty good proof that there is a treasure."

"Hope so, I'm sure, and that it doesn't turn out to be in assignats. They were the local currency under the French Revolution. I gather, and they were about as valuable



as German bank-notes are to-day, remember."

Once again Roche restrained himself. "You seem to forget that the letter mentions jewellery and not money," he protested icily. "Besides which, if you had studied the history of the times as closely as I have, you would know that the peasants' rising against the châteaux took place several years before the Revolution broke out in Paris at all. So assignats weren't even invented when the treasure was hidden."

"In that case, what was to prevent his going back and picking up his diamonds after the local troubles had blown over and before the Revolution began?"

"Haven't we gone over all this a dozen times? Doesn't he say in the letter that he—"

"That he is going to Paris. Certainly. But he doesn't say when."

"But he does, you ass. Where is the copy?" He fumbled for his pocket-book and from it produced a typewritten sheet. "There, look for yourself. You translated it and typed it out. There! 'I'm starting for Paris at once.' And didn't we find out at the Archives Nationales that he never got the chance to come back, because he was in prison all the time until they cut his head off?"

"If it comes to that, I meant to start at once for that trout-stream up by the Col after breakfast this morning, but I haven't got there yet."

"And a jolly good thing, too. If we had, we should never have tumbled to that blighter's game, and been able to feel certain that we were on the right track. Not that I've ever felt any doubt about it. Where's the letter again? There! M'n—m'n—concealed jewels—m'n—here we are 'cave by the fountain-head in the valley above Essac. Desiré will remember'—m'n—'mouth of the cave where he killed the snake that day when he was with Big Pierre driving the cattle to the summer pasture. The casket is in a recess by the water.' There, you couldn't want anything clearer than that. And there is no doubt that this is the valley they used to drive the cattle up before the old château was burned down. They do to this day. And that is the only stream in the valley."

"What about the cave?"

"That's the difficulty, of course, unless—"

"Unless there's been an earthquake, or an

avalanche, or something since that time. In which case—"

"By Jove, that is why that scoundrel has brought a pick with him. What asses we were not to think of it before! Look here, old man, if you will stay here to keep an eye on that brute and see he doesn't get away with anything, I will cut off down to the village and get a couple of pickaxes and a spade."

"My dear Roche, four miles there and back, and it will be dark in half an hour. Think a little. Besides, if your friend over yonder turns up all covered in diamond necklaces while you are away, what am I to say to him? He has every much as big a right to them as I have."

"Right to them! Wasn't the Marquis de la Roche-Metillac my direct ancestor? And who has a better right—"

"For all we know, he may have been the other man's grandpapa, too. In any case, I expect the French Government would have something to say to both of you if you did find anything. No, my bright son, I've had enough of this valley of yours for one day. We'll come back bright and early, and blow the whole place up with dynamite, if you like, but not to-night, thanks all the same."

"You can do as you like, of course. I shall stop here to keep an eye on that boulder over there."

"Right-o. You will find me at home when you get there. And don't forget that the old lady has promised us *civet de lièvre* to-night."

Nevertheless, Roche did not return to the village in time for that delicacy, even though it was kept back until the last conceivable moment. His faithless companion, somewhat pricked by conscience, lingered over the meal, and thereafter spent two very dull hours playing piquet with their host in the little *café* attached, according to local custom, to the farm in which they had taken rooms. But it was not until nearly ten o'clock—an unheard-of time in that quiet community—that the laggard made his appearance, his face eloquent of disquieting emotion.

"I was right," he burst out, disregarding well-meant offers of refreshment. "He is after the treasure, and, what's more, he's found it. What are we going to do now?"

"Personally, I am going to bed. But that needn't prevent your getting it off your chest while I am undressing, if it comforts



you. Did you have a chat with him, then? And is he a near relation?"

"It was like this," persisted Roche, following him to his room and ignoring all protests, audible or tacit. "I waited, where you left me, for something like half an hour, and then he suddenly showed up against the skyline. It was too dark to see where he came from. He was going over the

further hill-top—towards Les Arvens, you know."

"Pity you hadn't got a Lee-Enfield," commented Mowbray sleepily.

"Lucky for him I hadn't, with all I know now. Well, the only thing to do was to find out where he came from. It was not specially difficult. When I got to the top, he was going along the track that leads



"In the middle of the stream, which at that point scarcely reached to his knees, stood Roche, suggesting some angry water-god."





"Go away at once!" the woman was saying. "You have absolutely no right here."

"I suppose so—some kind of a foreigner, anyway, who didn't speak English. But I could see he was no end pleased about something. And he kept on talking about a treasure all the time."

"How do you know that?"

"It was a word that sounded like it, anyway. And I made sure of it afterwards. Walked down with him all the way to Bec. He is stopping at the Palace Hotel. I made up my mind to feed there, to see if I could pick up anything. You know the dining-room there, with a long table at one end?"

down to Bec-les-Bains. You know the place. He wasn't trying to conceal himself at all. Well, I followed him until, at a turn in the path, I nearly fell over him. He had stopped to light a pipe."

"And he told you all about it?"

"I don't know. I wish to goodness I had taken the trouble to learn a little more French when I was on the Somme."

"He was a Frenchman, then?"



He was dining there with a whole bunch of friends. There must have been a dozen of them. I got a little table by one of the columns, you know, where I could overhear them. They were all crazy about something, especially the women."

"There were women in it, too?"

"Four of them. Awful-looking frumps. And they were all over our man like flies round a honey-pot. Sickening it was."

Mowbray stifled a yawn a moment too late.

"The maddening part of it was that they would insist on speaking French, although I am sure some of them were English, especially two of the women. You know the sort of long-toothed, horse-faced sort of Englishwoman that wears round gold spectacles and her hair in a knot at the back. They were that sort. They kept on drinking our man's health about something, and waving their hands to him, and all that sort of tommyrot. In the end I got sick of it, and asked the waiter what they were talking about, as I might have done before if I had had any sense, and he told me. They were an exploring party, and one of them had found a treasure away up in the mountain. He didn't know what they were—what sort of people, I mean—oh, well, if even that won't keep you awake, good night!"

Thus it was that only on the following morning, as they sat over their coffee and rolls in the little *café*, did Mowbray learn his friend's firm determination—to make his way at once to the valley with pickaxe and shovel, and, if necessary, to seize his ancestor's treasure by force of arms.

"That means I have got to come with you," declared Mowbray ungraciously. "Otherwise it would mean going to the county gaol, wherever that may be, to bail you out—if they do bail you here on a murder charge, that is. Well, here goes!"

There was at least no opportunity for any murderous outbreak on Roche's part when at last they reached the scene of their quest. The desert valley was bare of life, human or otherwise, and the little stream tinkling down its rocky banks might have formed part of a lunar landscape, for any evidence to the contrary. They soon had proof, however, that human agency at least had recently been at work. Roche, who, as usual, was in advance in clambering up the gully which the stream had worn for itself, gave a sudden cry of wrathful surprise. When Mowbray reached him, it was to find

him peering into the mouth of what was undeniably a cave—though, judging from the entrance, a small one—which had certainly not been there when they passed the spot the previous day.

"That's what the pickaxe was for. You see, he levered that big rock away that had been in front of it. What are we going to do now?"

"The most obvious thing would seem to be to go in and look for the treasure," said Mowbray, his habitual cynicism rather shaken by the discovery. "Lucky we brought your electric torch, after all."

Roche was too excited to be ungenerous. Without stopping to reply, he bent double, for the entrance was very low, and began to worm his way towards the inner darkness, followed cautiously by his friend, whose stouter build rendered his progress more difficult.

It seemed at first that the cave was no more than a crack in the rock. Some ten feet from the entrance it came to an apparent end, and it was only on reaching what seemed an impassable barrier that the passage proved to turn sharply to the left and to descend at a sharp angle. Ten paces further it again changed its course to the right, dipped once more, and suddenly opened out into what proved to be a real cavern some thirty feet across and at least as many high. Its level was perfectly flat, as though through the action of water, and its roof formed an almost perfect dome, unexpectedly free from stalactites.

"Well, did my ancestor's letter tell the truth or not?" cried Roche exultantly, turning the beam of the torch to where his friend was cautiously descending from the upper level.

"It's a cave all right," agreed Mowbray, "but I haven't seen any treasure lying about yet, and I have barked my shins most horribly." Nevertheless, he looked round him with almost as keen an interest as did Roche. "Hallo, there's somebody's swimming bath! Reminds one of that Roman place off the Strand. Hope there aren't any extinct monsters about."

There was not indeed a swimming bath, but an underground stream, which, issuing from a dark recess on the further angle of the cavern, skirted it and lost itself under a low natural archway in the opposite wall. It was perhaps a couple of yards in breadth, and its dark turbulent waters, flashing back the rays of the electric torch, had a menacing suggestion of unplumbable depth.



"Nice sort of place to stumble into on a dark night," murmured Mowbray, regarding it askance. "Wonder where it goes to?"

"It can't be the stream that comes out into the valley. Much too big for that. Probably keeps on underground and comes out somewhere further down—at Bec, perhaps."

"And now for the treasure. It ought not to be difficult to find, if it is here."

"Unless that scoundrel carried it off last night. Though I scarcely think so, or he would have been showing it to his friends at the hotel."

"Doesn't follow. Might want to keep it dark from the Government. Anyway, here goes."

It was soon painfully evident that whatever treasures the cave might formerly have sheltered were there no longer. One or two fissures there were in the surrounding rock, but none sufficiently wide to have allowed the entry of even the smallest jewel casket. At the further end, just where the stream issued from the darkness, there was a wider recess divided off from the main cavern by an outcropping rock-fall, but this also was perfectly bare, its solid walls and floor offering no possibility of concealment. The whole cave looked, as Mowbray quoted, as though "forty maids with forty mops had swept it for half a year." In one place on the wall nearest the entrance there were certain discolorations upon which Roche eagerly seized as being, perhaps, of human origin and offering some clue to the hiding-place selected by the Marquis. They were of a faint brown, and dimly suggested such versions of horses or other animals as might have been devised by a six-year-old playing with a new paint-box, but so vague and uncertain that the baffled seeker was at last forced to admit that they were probably the effect of water trickling over the rock-surface.

"Well, what about it?" said Mowbray at last. "Either this isn't the cave at all, or——"

"I'm going down to Bec at once." There was a threatening light in Roche's eye. "If that blighter——"

"Hush! Switch the light off. There's someone coming."

Uncertain footsteps and the clattering of small stones made themselves audible in the passage by which they had come. It sounded, indeed, as if not one, but several people were cautiously descending the incline. On an impulse Roche and Mowbray

concealed themselves behind the outcrop masking the further recess and awaited events.

The yellow glare of candlelight slowly grew on the darkness, and several voices became increasingly clear. They seemed to be those of two men and a young woman. Unfortunately for Roche's frayed temper, they were talking in French.

"What, in the world's name, are they talking about?" he whispered desperately.

"They are your gang all right," Mowbray assured him, the roar of the stream covering his voice. "Come to look for—what the deuce—something about looking at pictures."

The newcomers ceased to speak, even to move for a long minute. It almost seemed as though they were holding their breath.

"Wonderful! Superb!" came at last the young woman's voice in shrill enthusiasm. "Oh, Maître!"

"But that, after all, is nothing," replied one of the men. "Interesting, certainly, though far inferior in execution to the caves of Les Arblez. But that is not my great discovery—what I have brought you to see. But come. It is time that we attired ourselves for the adventure. Fortunately the water is at a lower level than at my first visit in March, for which we must be thankful for the dry weather. And now, if you are ready."

"What the deuce——" burst out Mowbray, peering cautiously round their protecting rock. "They are going swimming! Of all the——"

The three intruders, after donning waterproof overalls similar in suggestion to the inner suit of a diver, were boldly adventuring into the stream, holding their candles carefully above the surface to light the way. Actually the water scarcely reached above the waist of the shortest of the three figures, so that when, going with the stream, they came to the archway through which it vanished, they were forced to bend double.

"So that's it!" burst out Roche furiously.

"No wonder we couldn't find it! Come on, before it's too late!" And, ignoring his friend's protest, without even waiting to remove his boots, he scrambled down into the bed of the stream and splashed his way towards where a dull luminosity still showed itself reflected on the water-surface. The more cautious Mowbray hesitated, shrugged his shoulders, and, after carefully removing his clothes to the uttermost limit imposed by the composition of the intruding party,



gingerly followed his example, anathematizing the iciness of the stream and the precipitance of his fellow-adventurer with equal bitterness.

Forbidding as seemed the passage, once the cave was left behind, it presented few difficulties. Only at the first entrance of the archway did the water approach to the roof. Within a few yards the interval increased until it was possible to walk almost upright, and a little later the passage opened out into yet another cavern, seeming in the torchlight even larger than that which served as its ante-chamber.

When, after a cautious passage, Mowbray at last reached his goal, it was to find a striking tableau awaiting him. In the middle of the stream, which at that point scarcely reached to his knees, stood Roche, suggesting some angry water-god, the water streaming from his dishevelled head and his once immaculate tweeds. Facing him at the water's edge were three figures whose shining overalls gave them the suggestion of overfed walruses. A lively altercation was in being between Roche and the smallest of the three.

"Go away at once!" the woman was saying. "You have absolutely no right here."

"I tell you it is my property."

"Your property? Stuff and nonsense! The Professor discovered it three months ago, and but for the water——"

"Discovered it! My great-grandfather put it there."

"Your great-grandfather! It has been there for a million years, I tell you!"

At this point the girl's companions joined in the discussion, though, as they spoke in

French, they added little to its clarity. Mowbray, modestly conscious of his *deshabillé*, remained without the circle of light, awaiting the moment to interfere. "Mayn't there be some mistake?" he put in, when the disputants paused for lack of breath, his chattering teeth somewhat interfering with his clarity. "Would you mind telling us exactly what you have discovered?"

"The greatest treasure——" the girl began.

Mowbray was too cold to be punctilious. "Diamonds? In a casket?" he interrupted.

"A sabre-toothed tiger, and what appears to be a cave-bear, only it is so indistinct."

"A tiger! Oh, my sacred aunt! Then you——"

"This is Professor Delepine, of the University of Besançon, the greatest living authority on palæoliths. He made this wonderful discovery, at the risk of his life, three months ago."

Some three feet from the ground, on a natural shelf against it, stood three shapeless figures, seemingly modelled out of clay and having something vaguely reminiscent of animals about them. The wavering shadow of the centre one indeed, outlined upon the wall behind it, suggested fairly clearly some ungainly quadruped, though without a head.

"The earliest example of human art," said the girl. "Thousands, even millions of years, perhaps, older than the first wall paintings. And you dare to claim——"

But Mowbray had already turned and was splashing through the water towards his clothes, leaving Roche to follow if he would.

## JUNE.

**R**OSE, nightingale, and golden moon,  
 Symbols of passion and delight,  
 All three are real to-night,  
 This night of England and of June.

Moonlit I hear the enchantment sung,  
 I breathe the magic of the flower,  
 And for a fragrant hour  
 Forget—forget I am not young.

MICHAEL WILSON.





“Permit me to introduce myself, sir—Julius Walsingham Playfellow, M.A. (Oxon).”

# THE KERBSTONE CAVALIERS

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

UPON a seat in Kensington Gardens, facing the traffic of the Bayswater Road, George Edward Macarthy sat and cursed his luck. There is an axiom to the effect that in moments of despondency much comfort may be derived from the counting of one's blessings; but George Edward Macarthy could find few blessings worth the counting. To be twenty-four and in good health is agreeable enough, so far as it goes; but to be twenty-four, in good health and out of work, is less so; while to be twenty-four, in good health, out of work and in love with a girl at Highgate, is not agreeable at all. Wherefore George Edward

Macarthy, who was all of these things, cursed his luck and stared sombrely at the uninspiring pageant of the Bayswater Road.

Quite a personable fellow, this George Edward. Tall, strongly-built, reddish-haired, grey-eyed, there was about him a pleasing air of dependability. His collar was a trifle frayed, but of unimpeachable cleanliness; his boots patched, but polished. His blue serge suit, though here and there coyly responsive to the rays of the sun, was well brushed and cared for. The slightly erratic creasing of his trousers hinted at dark hours spent beneath a mattress.

Into a pocket of these trousers George



Edward now thrust a hand. Gloomily he contemplated, for the fifth time that morning, that which the hand brought forth.

"Seven and ninepence!" said George Edward bitterly and loud.

"Dear, dear!" said a voice, so unexpectedly that George Edward started as if stung by a hornet. "As bad as that?"

George Edward turned, staring. Completely immersed in his melancholy reflections, he had failed to observe that he was no longer the sole tenant of the seat. Thus summarily acquainted with the fact, for a space he could only gape foolishly at the newcomer.

The owner of the voice was a small, shabby, elderly man of somewhat singular aspect. He was arrayed in a frock-coat of palpable antiquity and trousers which had plainly been devised for one of considerably ampler build; upon his head sat uneasily a bowler hat of unfashionable design and greenish colouring, as of age or mildew. His unhandsome but amiable countenance was seamed and lined to the semblance of a withered apple; a small, futile tuft of white hair depended from his lower lip. A thin, beak-like nose supported steel-rimmed spectacles, through which a pair of mild blue eyes gazed apologetically upon George Edward.

"I ask your pardon, sir," said this individual gravely, "for this intrusion. My excuse must be that I have a reason. It is for that reason that I ask—in all sympathy, believe me—if seven and ninepence is at the moment the sum total of your worldly possessions?"

George Edward, still held by astonishment, nodded almost unconsciously.

"Ah," said the shabby man, "your demeanour led me to fear as much. Dear, dear! Am I right, then, in assuming that you are—only temporarily, I trust—out of employment?"

There was something in the little man's earnestness that forbade George Edward to take offence at this catechism. So he nodded again.

"In that case," said the shabby man courteously, "may I request the pleasure of your company at luncheon?"

The mouth of George Edward opened slightly, but no word came therefrom.

"At the Regal Hotel, in Piccadilly," added the other. "The cooking there is beyond praise."

The mouth of George Edward opened yet

further; something akin to alarm crept into his expression; he sent a furtive glance to left and right. The shabby man smiled and shook his head.

"A pardonable suspicion, but I am not mad. Permit me to explain." He cleared his throat with startling resonance. "The fact is, I have just won a prize in a limerick competition."

From the still further bemused George Edward issued a vague, astonished noise.

"In *The Daily Courier*," pursued the shabby man. "I have always had a certain talent for light verse, and my contribution was awarded—justly, as I think—the second prize. You have noticed, perhaps, the modern tendency to offer prizes of a bizarre and catchpenny character in such competitions? I was requested to choose between a lightweight motor-cycle and a free luncheon for two at the Regal Hotel every day for a month. I chose the latter, for whereas I can exist comfortably upon one good meal a day, a motor-cycle is of small value to one who cannot buy petrol, which I understand is essential. I could, no doubt, have sold it, but it has always been my misfortune that no sum of money, however large, ever remains in my possession for more than forty-eight hours."

He paused to draw breath. George Edward, upon whom the placid voice and the peculiarity of the situation were exercising an almost hypnotic effect, said nothing.

"So," said the shabby man, "I chose the luncheon. Now, I am what may be termed a gregarious feeder. A solitary meal, however artistically conceived, has no charm for me. It is my intention, therefore, throughout the coming month, to entertain each day some person whose circumstances match my own. The necessary task of selection adds an interest to life. Yesterday—the first of the series—my choice was not, I admit, entirely happy. I found him on the Embankment, and his table manners were—regrettable. But you," said the shabby man, beaming upon George Edward, "appear an ideal subject. You are obviously at odds with fortune, yet you wear a brave front. I could not hope for a more suitable guest—that is, if you accept."

There fell a silence. In the mind of George Edward, now slowly recovering from his initial astonishment, Caution was at war with Inclination. Caution suggested that this was some elaborate species of confidence trick; Inclination reminded him



simply that he was hungry. The struggle was brief.

"Thanks," said George Edward, "I'd like to come, sir."

"Capital!" exclaimed the shabby man, rising abruptly. With a magnificent gesture he swept the dingy bowler from his head, disclosing a glittering skull completely innocent of hair. "Permit me to introduce myself, sir—Julius Walsingham Playfellow, M.A. (Oxon), once a member of the scholastic profession, and now—what you see."

"Thanks," said George Edward. "My name's Macarthy." It sounded very inadequate.

"Charmed," said Mr. Playfellow, bowing. "Now, Mr. Macarthy, I have not a watch upon me—nor anywhere else, for that matter—but I judge that it is about twelve-thirty. Shall we walk through the Gardens to Piccadilly? The exercise will assist our appetites and save our 'bus fares."

Thus they set off, this odd couple, and thus in the course of time they came to the Regal Hotel. Throughout the journey thither George Edward said but little, employing chiefly such words as "Yes" and "No" and "Really." For he had never before encountered such a one as Mr. Playfellow, and was conversationally at a loss. Happily Mr. Playfellow was clearly of the opinion that, whereas it takes two to make a quarrel, an entirely satisfactory conversation may be manufactured by one. He spoke without ceasing; words bubbled from him in a grammatical torrent. He spoke of this, that, and the other thing; of Byzantine architecture, of the recent drought in China, of the effect of Prohibition upon a nation's morals; of Parliamentary procedure, of Board School curricula, of road-hoggery (this as he narrowly escaped bisection by a taxi at Hyde Park Corner). But of himself, his past or his present, he spoke not at all.

Thus presently they came to the Regal Hotel, which is a very great hotel indeed. It is an hotel much favoured by North Country millionaires, by aliens of eminence or notoriety, and by theatrical bankrupts. It is marvellously furnished and incredibly discreet; there is hot water and cold in every bedroom; and that it should have bestowed a month's free luncheons upon *The Daily Courier* was exactly what one would have expected of it.

Into this gilt-edged Paradise George Edward—to whom such magnificence was as unfamiliar as Court ritual to an Eskimo—

penetrated with the utmost diffidence on the heels of his host. He suffered entanglement in the revolving door, trod shrinkingly the yielding carpet of the lounge, and comported himself generally in the manner of a bishop about to rob a bank for a bet. Foggily groping after Mr. Playfellow—whose mode of entry suggested that he had just paid cash for the building—he found himself in a huge, noisy place crammed with tables and people and mirrors, trod earnestly upon somebody's foot, apologised hotly, and came dizzily to anchor upon a small gilt chair, gasping slightly.

Across the table Mr. Playfellow beamed at him.

"Well, here we are! I must confess, Mr. Macarthy, that I find this atmosphere, meretricious though it may be, distinctly stimulating. The food, too—which reminds me that, under the terms on which my prize was awarded, we are restricted to the *table d'hôte*. Nor is wine included." Parsimonious hair-splitting, in my opinion, but one must take it or leave it. Ah, here is sustenance!" . . .

Forty minutes later George Edward sighed heavily, pushed back his chair, and bent a replete but grateful eye upon his host. Rich and varied foodstuffs had so wrought upon him that he was beginning to feel that he had haunted the Regal Hotel for years.

"That," observed George Edward, "was a bit of all *right*!"

"I am glad," returned Mr. Playfellow simply. He produced a yellow packet of cigarettes, offered it, lit one himself and looked thoughtfully at his guest. During the meal he had talked incessantly, but merely of cabbages and kings; now he seemed disposed to sound a more personal note. "You will not resent it, I hope," he said, "if I ask how a young man of your obvious capabilities finds himself without occupation."

George Edward did not resent it. There were moments when he could have confided in a lamp-post, and this was one of them.

"I had a job in a house-agent's office up to a month ago. Then we had a row, and he called me a liar, and I gave him one on the jaw. So I got no reference and I can't get another job. If I had a hundred quid, I could go in with a pal of mine that's starting a garage business, but seven and ninepence isn't a hundred quid, not by a long shot. And it isn't only that. There's a girl——" He stopped abruptly, aware that he was about to commit the un-English sin of



betraying emotion, and sentimental emotion at that. Mr. Playfellow made noises of condolence.

"A girl, eh? Dear, dear! Still, you gave him one on the jaw. Capital! Do not lose heart, Mr. Macarthy. It is a favourite saying of my wife's that the darkest hour invariably precedes the dawn. Trite, but true."

George Edward stared at him.

"Your wife? But look here, sir, why isn't she—I mean, I hope I haven't done her out of a——"

"Reassure yourself, Mr. Macarthy. I have not seen my wife for twelve years. A fine woman, sir, but impulsive. The quarrel which separated us was trivial in origin—it arose from a complaint on my part concerning the quality of a sago pudding—but serious in effect, for we have not met since. My circumstances, alas, have deteriorated since those days. Then I held a tolerably remunerative appointment, now I—do not. I have become, I fear, unemployable. Still, people are kind, and I can manage on very little. I often——" He broke off, and, leaning forward, lowered his voice. "The lady upon whose foot you trod—accidentally, I am sure—as you came in, is not, by any chance, a friend of yours? She seems somewhat interested in us."

George Edward allowed his gaze to slide unobtrusively to the right. The lady in question sat at the next table and well repaid inspection. She was a woman of about thirty-five, tall, slender, and remarkably comely in a dark, foreign fashion. Her hair was black and lustrous, as were her eyes; her features had a classic regularity. There was about her an air of high degree; she held herself as one born to command. She was attired very plainly, but very neatly, in black. It seemed that she battled with some powerful emotion, for her long, slim fingers were drumming upon the table and her great eyes were fixed upon George Edward with an astonishing intensity. He felt that he had never seen a face so melancholy or so beautiful.

"She looks worried," he murmured.

"She does indeed. Who knows what tragedy—good gracious!"

For the black-eyed lady had risen from her seat and was advancing sinuously towards them. Before either could utter a word, she sank uninvited into the third chair at their table.

"Please forgive," she said rapidly, in a soft, liquid voice. "I am in great trouble and alone, and I need help. You gentlemen

have the kind faces, so I come to beg of you your assistance. It is not *proper* of me—— Bah!" She snapped her fingers. "But it is life and death!"

The ensuing pause was broken very creditably by Mr. Playfellow.

"Madam," said he, "pray command us. If we can be of any service——"

"Sirs," said the dark-eyed lady urgently, "you can be of the very highest service, if you will. I will tell you all, but I must entreat that if after you do not wish to help, you will be silent. Yes?"

"Madam, you have our word. That is so, Mr. Macarthy?"

"Er—oh, yes!" said George Edward. He had been considerably taken aback, but he was growing hardened to surprise, and his recovery was swift. Moreover, this distressed lady was very good to look upon, and her queer mode of speech distinctly attractive. Not altogether his style, of course, but still—— He inclined an attentive ear.

"I thank you both," said the dark-eyed lady. She leaned forward and spoke almost in a whisper. "I am Donna Juanita Inez Villera. My husband is Innocencio Villera, President of Guayacuador."

"South America, I presume," ventured Mr. Playfellow shrewdly.

"Where else? Though in this England there are not many who know it. A small State, and much troubled. But Innocencio is a brave man and a good President. Yet he lacks money. And money there must be, if he is to keep peace. You see? Now, there are certain ones in Guayacuador who seek a change of President."

"It is usual, I believe," murmured Mr. Playfellow.

"These say that Innocencio is a coward and a thief, and that Ignacio dos Santos should be President in his place. Oh, truly a vile dog and son of a dog, that one! Always dos Santos plots against Innocencio, but Innocencio has the army. You see? But now there is a lack of money, and the army must be paid, or—— So what to do?"

Dramatically she paused. George Edward, thrilled to the marrow, waited breathlessly. Mr. Playfellow nodded comprehendingly.

"Now," said Donna Villera, "my husband has certain jewels of great worth. It is decided to borrow money on these jewels—a loan, yes. But there must be a great secrecy, lest dos Santos should hear. One must be sent who will not be suspected. You see? What more natural than that I,



who have the English education, shall come to England for a holiday? So I am here, and with me the jewels."

"You will pardon me," interjected Mr. Playfellow, "but if the matter is so urgent, could not the transaction have been effected in America?"

"America," replied Donna Villera haughtily, "and we of Guayacuador are not great friends. No. There was a little affair of a tourist who died—a nothing, but how great a fuss! America is no good. But England, yes. For in England there is one good friend of my husband—a gentleman very rich, very kind. I meet him in one hour. But now listen. Up to now I have been happy that all is so nearly over. But, alas, it seems that I am happy too soon! My object is known. I am followed." Her voice sank again to a whisper. *"Dos Santos is in this hotel!"*

"No!" said Mr. Playfellow, aghast.

"Crumbs!" said George Edward, before he could stop himself.

"But yes! Through the door I saw him, and with him another of his foul crew—one Morales. Oh, it is easy to see their plan! Here alone in England I am helpless. You see? They have but to take from me the jewels, and they may strike at Innocencio as they please!"

"The police——" began Mr. Playfellow.

"The police! Bah! You have not understood! This is a private matter. These jewels—who knows how they came to my husband? The manners of Guayacuador are not the manners of England! There must be no police! No. If you, sirs, will not help, I must do what I can alone."

She fell silent, her fingers drumming upon the table, her great eyes travelling broodingly from one to the other. Throughout her narrative George Edward had sat as if riveted to his chair, his mouth agape and his eyes bulging with interest. Often had he read of just such situations, but he had never pictured himself as taking a prominent part in one. As his first bewilderment faded, it was succeeded by a growing excitement. Fear had no place in George Edward's make-up; the colour of his hair and the set of his chin marked him as one who in more spacious times might have made a passable buccaneer, and who, even now, thought nothing of smiting house-agents upon the jaw. To such a one this promise of adventure was most agreeable. He was aware of gratitude to Mr. Playfellow for having introduced him to so

diverting an experience—and, incidentally, to so attractive a lady. Her eyes were really—— George Edward shifted in his chair and spoke.

"We'll help all right! What do you want us to do?"

Mr. Playfellow nodded agreement with this statement.

"We are at your service, madam. Such as we are—poor knights of the gutter, cavaliers, as one might phrase it, of the kerbstone—we are at your disposal. I myself am not so young as I was, nor am I noticeably muscular, but Mr. Macarthy here can supply all that I lack in that respect."

"I thank you both," said Donna Villera simply. "Did I not say that you had the kind faces? Listen, then! All that I need is opportunity to depart from this hotel unmolested. Then am I safe, for my husband's good friend awaits me. But it is in my mind that dos Santos and Morales will make their attempt when I leave this room. Even now they are in the—what do you say?—the lounge, yes, for but ten minutes ago I saw them as they looked through the door at me, though I think they believe themselves unnoticed. They wish no public disturbance—no. But what easier than to follow me to my room, force an entry, take the jewels and depart, knowing that I can raise no outcry? You see? Therefore if you, my good friends, will accompany me to my apartment and contrive to delay those vile ones until I am gone, you will place me in your debt for ever and earn the gratitude of Guayacuador."

Her good friends hesitated not at all.

"We shall be charmed," said Mr. Playfellow.

"Righto!" said George Edward. "Let's get on with it!"

"Then follow, please," requested the lady. Gracefully she rose from her chair and gracefully threaded her way across the crowded room, her cavaliers in close attendance. As Mr. Playfellow, with his old-world courtesy, held back the big glass door for her, she paused to allow George Edward to range himself upon her other side.

"Ah!" she said softly, as they debouched into the lounge. "They are here, yes! See—by the door! The big one is dos Santos! Now swiftly to the lift, my friends!"

George Edward, quickening his step, shot a glance at the gentlemen designated. The villains of the piece were standing by the



huge revolving door that gave on to the street, so that they might command the lounge and the exit from the restaurant. They seemed sufficiently formidable opponents. Dos Santos was a tall, powerful individual, black-haired and black-moustached, unobtrusively apparelled in

grey and carrying a soft felt hat. His companion was even swarthier, but short, lean and wiry; he wore an exotic satin tie and repellent cloth-topped boots above and below a brown suit of unfamiliar cut. George Edward noted that the appearance of Donna Villera and her escort galvanised



"George Edward . . . cautiously approached the turn of the wall and peered round it."



these persons into activity. Morales, a surprised expression on his sallow face, touched his companion's arm and started forward. Dos Santos, frowning in a puzzled manner, followed suit. But the lounge was long and their quarry at the far end of it; ere the two men had covered half the

distance, Donna Villera had preceded her cavaliers into the lift and was urging the excessively-buttoned youth in charge to exhibit a little speed.

As the ground floor dropped away from them, the wife of the President emitted a relieved sigh.



"The others, warily following."



"You see?" she murmured. "They did not expect you, no, so they hesitate. But they will come." She looked thoughtfully at Mr. Playfellow. "My friends, it is in my mind that I have done wrong to bring you into trouble. These are cruel men, and who knows——"

"Madam," returned Mr. Playfellow, with a very gallant smile that sat oddly on his wrinkled visage, "we do not fear—trouble."

"If they turn nasty," added George Edward, "all the better!" And he meant it, for a prospect of physical conflict has certain attractions for one dissatisfied with the universe.

The suite of Donna Villera lay upon the fourth floor, and comprised a bedroom, a bathroom, and sitting-room, all furnished with the flamboyant discomfort characteristic of such places. Thither, hurrying at speed along an interminable corridor, came their occupant and her two champions. Donna Villera led the way into the sitting-room and locked the door.

"Wait!" she commanded, and vanished into the bedroom. In a moment she reappeared, carrying a large jewel-case fashioned of purple leather. "It is well," she said, "that I did not place this in the hotel safe last night, as was my first thought. Dos Santos would have made very sure that I did not take it out again! Now we must hurry. It may be that we can escape before they come. You—you will not let them harm me?"

It has been well said that every crisis produces somehow the man best fitted to deal with it. The present situation ran true to form. As Donna Villera glanced appealingly from one to the other of her cavaliers, George Edward assumed complete direction of affairs. A moment ago he had been but a large, personable youth with little but his size to commend him; now, as it were in the wink of an eye, he became the Man of Action. One may suppose that there awoke in him the spirit of some red-headed, buccaneering Macarthy of the past—that same spirit to which a loose-tongued house-agent owed an aching jaw and a sense of grievance; alternatively one may hold responsible the bright eyes of the lady in the case. Whatever the cause, the result was noticeable.

"We will not!" he said briskly. "Now I'll sprint to the end of the passage and look round. You two come along slowly, and keep an eye on me. We're going to pull this off somehow!"

He unlocked the door and was gone. The others, warily following, saw him running swiftly down the corridor ahead of them. At its far end the corridor bent to the right and ended in the square landing that held the lift-shaft and the head of the stairs. George Edward reached this curve, slackened speed to a stealthy walk, cautiously approached the turn of the wall and peered round it. One second later he sprang back, turned, and came darting up the corridor again, gesturing vehemently as he ran.

"They're coming up!" he panted as he drew near. "I saw their heads—in the lift! Get back, quick! Has your bedroom got a door on this passage? . . . That one? In you go, then!" He whirled on Mr. Playfellow. "You get into the sitting-room and lock the door! I'll come in a tick. Jump to it!"

And before Donna Villera could utter a syllable of protest or inquiry, George Edward had grasped her arm, hustled her into the bedroom, and locked the door. There he paused and looked about him, breathing hard.

"But——" began Donna Villera.

"That's the place!" cried George Edward, pointing. The management of the Regal Hotel, prompted by a natural desire for economy, had dispensed with wardrobes and provided in lieu triangular cupboards built into a corner of every bedroom. This cupboard George Edward now indicated.

"Get into that!" he said crisply. "I'll meet 'em in the next room and bluff 'em into thinking you've got away. You get into that cupboard, quick! Take the jewel-case with you."

His *protégée*, however, seemed unreasonably disposed to criticise this suggestion.

"No," she protested, "I——"

She got no further. George Edward jerked open the cupboard door with one hand, seized Donna Villera with the other, and hoisted her within with no more ado than if she had been a sack of oats. As a further precaution on her behalf, he locked her in and slid the key into his pocket.

"You're safe there if you keep quiet," he assured her, "and I'll let you out as soon as I can." Without lingering for a reply, he sprang for the door that communicated with the sitting-room.

Nor was he any too soon. Even as he stepped across the threshold and locked the door after him—the thought passing inconsequently across his mind



that the greater part of his life nowadays seemed to be spent in locking doors—footsteps sounded from the corridor, and there became audible a quiet but insistent knocking.

“Open this door!” said a voice—a harsh, peremptory voice.

George Edward grinned evilly and stole silently across the room to where Mr. Playfellow, an absurdly unimpressive poker in his hand and an expression of inflexible determination upon his lined countenance, stood tensely by the table.

“Get ready to bolt,” whispered George Edward, “when I open the door. Then we’ll shut ’em in here and get her out of the next room.”

Mr. Playfellow nodded tranquilly.

“Lead on, Mr. Macarthy,” he whispered back. “I am a little old for this form of diversion, but I must admit that I find it quite exhilarating. As my dear wife so frequently remarked——”

“Open this door!” came the peremptory voice from the corridor.

Thereafter events marched with extraordinary rapidity and no little confusion. George Edward, motioning Mr. Playfellow to follow, tiptoed to the door and opened it suddenly, at the same moment thrusting forward his right foot. This age-old device succeeded admirably. Dos Santos, entering at a bound, tripped over the obstacle, reeled forward, and came to ground with a thud that rattled the pink-and-yellow vases on the mantelshelf. Thus far all was according to schedule; but here occurred a hitch. George Edward, confidently awaiting Morales, that the latter might be despatched to join the miscreant upon the floor, found this ambition unrealised. Dos Santos had entered alone; of his companion in evil there was no sign.

Pressure of affairs forbade consideration of this point, for already the stricken dos Santos was beginning to labour to his feet, gasping for the breath which had been torn from him. Mr. Playfellow, obeying orders, scuttled from the room. George Edward sprang after him, and was on the point of turning the key upon his captive, when a cry from the ex-schoolmaster gave him pause.

“Look out!” And then: “Ow!”

George Edward spun on his heel, and immediately sustained a blow on the side of his head from what felt like a sandbag. He staggered back against the wall and perceived, as through a thick mist, the squat

figure of Morales, who had been left to guard the bedroom door, from which post he had advanced like a projectile, sweeping an M.A. Oxon from his path with one hand and with the other notifying George Edward of his intentions.

George Edward pulled himself together and crouched. Morales, his wiry arms curved as for a passionate embrace, his sallow face alight with an unholy joy, came bounding to the attack.

The ensuing combat was brief, but not uninteresting. George Edward, despite his size and his natural enthusiasm for such amusements, was hopelessly outclassed. Morales was handicapped by none of the conventions that govern modern pugilism. His aim was to annihilate George Edward, and to that end he employed indiscriminately and in unison his hands, his feet, his teeth, and his head. George Edward did his best, but achieved little. He contrived to administer two weighty blows at his adversary’s ribs, but for the most part had no opportunity for anything but defence. Mr. Playfellow, noting this fact, came gallantly to his assistance; but Morales flung out a leg, and the ex-schoolmaster, tottering rapidly backwards, hit the wall with considerable force and slid thence to a sitting posture upon the floor, where he remained, wheezing painfully. To be kicked in the stomach by a cloth-topped boot is to suffer the uttermost humiliation.

To George Edward, battling gamely but with dwindling optimism, the engagement seemed endless. In reality it endured precisely twenty seconds. At the end of that hectic period something impinged wickedly upon George Edward’s skull; Morales and the Regal Hotel somersaulted twice and went out; blackness succeeded. Dos Santos, issuing from the sitting-room, had struck well and shrewdly. . . .

A century passed. Carefully George Edward opened an eye, blinked, and opened the other. Foggily he perceived that he was now seated upon a chair in Donna Villera’s sitting-room. He endeavoured to lift a hand to his head, which ached notably; but he found this impossible, and, glancing down, saw that his wrists were held by—of all incredible things—handcuffs. Looking about him rather dazedly, he observed upon another chair the dejected shape of Mr. Playfellow, similarly ornamented. By the table stood Morales and his associate.

The latter spoke.

“Where’s that woman?”



George Edward rallied manfully. He stood pledged to shield Donna Villera from these carrion, and shield her he would, if it were his last act.

"She got away, you fool," he said.

"Rubbish!" said dos Santos, rather surprisingly. "We saw her come up here, and she can't have got away since."

"She got away," returned George Edward, with quite a convincing appearance of satisfaction, "*before* you came. There's more than one way out of the hotel." This seemed a tolerably safe observation.

Dos Santos stared at him.

"Oh!" said he at length. "Well, we'll look into that. Anyway, we've got you two, though where *you* come in, I'm blessed if I can see! I understood she always worked alone."

"You've got us, dos Santos," said George Edward bravely, "but you can't touch us. This isn't *your* filthy country. You'd better take these things off and hook it before we put the police on you."

The other started; his jaw dropped slightly and his stare deepened in intensity.

"Dos Santos?" he echoed. "What the deuce—— 'Put the police on us,' eh? What's the idea, you——"

At this juncture there occurred an interruption. The door opened sharply and a woman entered—a large, elderly, imposing woman, opulently upholstered in silks and furs and much ornate jewellery. Her face was arresting rather than handsome, her eye blue and penetrating, her jaw prominent. Beneath her arm she carried an insignificant canine of that rat-like species which seems to have been created solely that it may be trodden underfoot by the unwary. Upon the threshold this newcomer paused, gazing in manifest astonishment at the scene before her. Dos Santos stepped forward and accomplished a stiff little bow.

"I must apologise for this intrusion, madam. I am——"

A loud cry from Mr. Playfellow interrupted him.

"Emma!"

The large lady started convulsively and peered past dos Santos at the quaint little figure in the chair. She started again and put a hand to her heart.

"Julius!" she said faintly. The next instant the rat-like dog had fallen to the carpet, dos Santos was thrust aside, and she was bending solicitously over Mr. Playfellow, who had struggled to his feet and

was regarding her with a blend of stupefaction and joy.

"Emma, where have you——"

"Julius, why did you——"

The voice of dos Santos cut across this duet.

"Excuse me! Are you Madame Desnoyers, the singer?"

The large lady turned and directed at him a glance that might have cowed a basilisk.

"That is my professional name, certainly. And these are *my* rooms and this is *my* husband. May I ask who *you* are, and what you are doing here, and why you have put these—these things on his hands?"

The person addressed drew back defensively, his assurance badly shaken. He took out a handkerchief and mopped his brow.

"This," he announced vaguely, "is beyond me! If that's your husband, then why——" He pulled himself together and cleared his throat. "My name is Sanders, madam, and I'm from Scotland Yard. Here's my card. This gentleman is Señor Morales, of the Madrid police. I understand that you have—or had—in your employ a person calling herself Freda Jackson?"

"My secretary. I engaged her in Madrid a fortnight ago."

"It's her we're after. Her real name's Hogan, and she's wanted by the police of every country from here to Hong Kong and back again. Dutch Annie, they call her, and she's the smartest jewel thief working to-day, by a long chalk. You could paper this room with the warrants that are out for her. When you took her on in Madrid, she'd just got away with five thousand pounds' worth of stuff, and Morales here was after her. We traced her here and brought along a warrant—we've wanted her for years, too. We didn't want a disturbance downstairs, so we followed her up here. Then these two"—he indicated the cavaliers—"turned up, helped her to get away—or so *he* says—and tried to put it across us." He paused. "Well, if anybody's got any explanation, I'd be glad to have it."

There was a memorable silence. George Edward, who had watched the happenings of the past five minutes like one in a trance, sat limply in his chair, his mouth open and his manacled hands dangling between his knees. There could be no doubt that Mr. Sanders had spoken the truth, and George Edward, who had all the average Englishman's awe of the police, felt shaken to the core. Not for all the treasures of Ind could he have uttered a single word. The Man of Action had had his little



moment; the control of the situation devolved now upon the Man of Words.

"It would appear," said Mr. Playfellow calmly, "that Mr. Macarthy and I have been the victims of circumstance and of a singularly unmoral woman. The obvious course is to relate everything."

This he proceeded to do, displaying both a nice sense of the dramatic and a feeling for the apt phrase. Mr. Sanders listened attentively; as the tale drew to its close, a faint smile dawned upon his swarthy features, and a deep chuckle issued from the region of his boots.

"Isn't that just like her?" he said, almost proudly. "To pick on you two fool—you two to help her make her getaway! All that stuff about Presidents and things! Great, I call it!" Then the smile faded. "All the same, if she's *got* away, it looks to me as if you two will have to——"

A voice cut him short—a hoarse, unrecognisable voice, the voice of George Edward, by a herculean effort achieving speech.

"She's not got away. She's in the cupboard in the next room."

Sensation. Rapid questionings. Unlocking of handcuffs and production of cupboard key. Departure of Mr. Sanders, followed by the taciturn Señor Morales.

In a very short time they were back again, one upon each side of Donna Juanita Inez Villera. That lady was perfectly composed, albeit a trifle flushed, for the cupboards of the Regal Hotel are inadequately ventilated. Her fine eyes, roving sullenly about the room, came to rest upon George Edward. Most villainously she scowled at him.

"If I could get at you, my beauty," she said harshly, "I'd teach you to lock me in!" She moved her handcuffed arms menacingly.

"Well, Annie," said Mr. Sanders genially, "it's nice to see you. That was a great idea of yours, roping in these two to help you dodge us. The stage lost a fine actress when you went wrong, my girl."

"Cheese it, you big stiff," returned Miss Hogan sourly. "The Yard 'd have lost a fine cop if I'd had my gun on me, my man. All the same, you ought to have seen the way they lapped it up. Honest, it was a scream!"

"No doubt," agreed Mr. Sanders. "Still, I dare say they'll forgive you. Well, let's have a look at this." He took the jewel-case from under his arm, unlocked it, and shot the contents forth upon the table. From the company arose a concerted gasp, which

is a thing very rarely heard. Necklaces of diamonds, of pearls, of emeralds; diamond rings, ruby rings, sapphire rings; pendants of jade, of amber, of amethyst, of turquoise; bracelets and anklets and earrings; these flashed and gleamed and shimmered under Mr. Sanders's hand.

"I dare say they'll forgive you," he repeated. "I forgot to say, gentlemen, that there are about half a dozen rewards offered for this stuff. You ought to do quite well out of it. The——"

"My pearls!" cried Madame Desnoyers. "And my earrings and my——"

"Quite so, madam," said Mr. Sanders soothingly. "If you'll just step round to Vine Street and identify them formally, they'll be returned to you. You two gentlemen also, please. Morales, fetch a cab, will you? They'll love to see you at Vine Street, Annie."

"Rot 'em!" said Miss Hogan crisply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Half an hour later three persons stood in a remote corner of the Regal lounge. Of these, two were unashamedly wiping their eyes; the third gazed fixedly before him, while his lips moved soundlessly.

"Twelve years, Emma!" said Mr. Playfellow. "And you have grown rich and famous, while I——"

"Be quiet, Julius!" ordered Madame Desnoyers. "Anyway, it was all my fault. I've never touched sago from that day to this."

"We have both learned wisdom, it seems," murmured her husband. He looked at the third member of the party. "And what of you, Mr. Macarthy?"

"Three hundred quid!" said Mr. Macarthy raptly. "Three hundred——"

"Useful for the garage business, eh?" said Mr. Playfellow. "Capital!"

"You will have tea with us, Mr. Macarthy?" put in his wife.

George Edward returned abruptly to earth. "Eh? Er—no, thanks all the same. Thanks very much—no. I—I must get out to Highgate—people expecting me——" He groped for his hat.

"Ah, Youth, Youth!" observed Mr. Playfellow, beaming. "We would not detain you, my dear fellow." As George Edward mumbled his farewells and turned to go, the M.A. Oxon laid a hand upon his arm. "But," he whispered, "we shall expect you to luncheon to-morrow. *A la carte*, Mr. Macarthy—and wine. Good day to you, my friend!"



# KING OF THE RIVERS

By CRAVEN HILL

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

**B**ROWNIE was born, along with his brother, in a roomy den on the banks of the Silver River. The holt was comparatively public, being within twenty yards of a narrow footpath that ran across the meadows to Old Oak Farm. Many people passed along that path in the course of a week, yet no one, save a few fishermen and the farmer up at the farm, knew that otters had whelped there or even suspected their presence, for beyond a few gleaming bones and dry fish-scales which adorned the banks around the holt, there was nothing to give their home away.

Overhead the swaying elders bent to the soft breezes, and out in front of the den the wide river ran sweetly beneath blue skies, babbling its way gently down towards the sea. All around the meadows stretched, carpeted with marsh-marigolds, reaching up to Fir Tree Wood, which crowned the hill beyond the farm. A wonderful picture indeed. Many tourists from far-off smoky cities, passing by, looked on this scene and sighed that they could not live amid such beautiful surroundings. One poet has written about it: more than one artist has sketched it. Yet there is no doubt whatever that it had no effect on any of the otter family, who rarely saw it by the light of the sun.

It was only during the night, beneath the dim light of the stars, that the parent otters bestirred their babies and bundled them out into the cool waters to hunt and fish, first for food and then for sport. The front door of the holt was under water, yet, in spite of this easy and safe access, neither Brownie nor his brother took kindly to the river at first. But they soon grew used to it, and could catch a full-sized trout with all the agility of their parents.

And when the hunting was done, the whole family sported and skirmished, twisting their

bodies about like so many serpents. In and out of the water they would glide with such consummate ease that they seemed to be impelled by mere volition, for otters are playful animals, as quick and charming in their movements as kittens. And the parents were quite as playful as their offspring, and joined in the fray each night with the utmost zest.

Indeed, few creatures in those parts were quicker than the parent otters, and yet within a few short weeks Brownie out-classed them and could shoot down the stream at a much faster pace than either of his parents. In cunning and strength he soon outreached them, too, and, in fact, was something of an infant prodigy. Often, after he was some weeks old, he would oust his father from his rightful position and would lead the whole family on a fishing expedition, and, curiously enough, they accepted his leadership without question.

One night, when the crescent of the moon hung like a lantern over Fir Tree Wood, Brownie emerged from the den and slid away into the waters. Presently his head appeared in mid-stream, and, looking round to make sure that the others were following, he paddled over to the opposite bank. There he stood on his hind legs and in otter voice—half whine, half whistle—he called them up. But no sooner were all upon the bank than something bright in the water attracted his attention; like a silver flash, a fish shot down-stream.

All the otters saw that fish, but Brownie was, as usual, the first to move, and instantly he slid into the swirling current and dashed after his prey. A few moments later, with the fish in his mouth, he reappeared and climbed on to the bank, among his admiring family, to devour his catch. Hurriedly the others came up to him, demanding a share, but the fish was Brownie's fish, and he wasn't



going to share it with anyone : if the others were hungry, they could go and hunt for themselves. So Brownie settled down to his solitary meal, and when he had finished, nothing was left but a few scales on the muddy bank and a dark patch of blood to mark the scene of his repast.

All that summer Brownie remained with his family as their guide and leader, a very king of the river, albeit a selfish one, and when at length the mellow days of autumn came, he was a full-grown, fine sleek fellow, about twenty-eight inches long, and covered

and cautiously he swam away up-stream, intent only upon swimming till his powers gave out. To the young otter, who had so far seen very little of the world, the trip was a great adventure, and because it was so he loved it.

There is no greater joy to the truly living thing than the joy of being alive, of feeling alive in every part and power. It was a thorough joy to Brownie now to dash through the flowing waters, heading for distant parts he knew not where. On and on he went, keeping all the time to the river,



"Then with his violently flapping prize in his mouth he brought it up in triumph and shook it proudly before the female otter."

with a wealth of thick fur which effectively protected him against chill.

But with the coming of winter he entered upon a period of new feelings, new sensations, which, coupled with his adventurous nature, decided him that the time had come to cut himself adrift from the bosom of his family, who would have as much as they could do to look after themselves during the hard days of the cold season.

Accordingly, one night when his parents were sporting with his dusky brother out in the fairway of the Silver River, Brownie somehow managed to give them the slip,

which took him past the outskirts of the farm and swirled in countless eddies between the muddy banks ; on past leafy copses and then through meadowlands again until at last he reached the Great Fish Lake.

The lake was but a few hundred yards across, yet to Brownie it seemed like vast oceans : never had he dreamed that such quantities of water could exist. As he swam into it he raised his little head above the surface with wondering eyes which shone with innate lustre and intelligence. Then, somewhat tired after such a long journey, he sank down to the bottom of black mud,



the accumulation of ages of leaf mould, where, to his great delight, he found a new kind of fish that twisted and squirmed in and out the ooze—to wit, eels. He caught one or two and brought them to land to

exciting discovery. In this lake were great swift fish, like none he had ever chased before, big fighting fish that struggled desperately to elude capture, and who required a long and arduous chase to be



WARWICK  
REYNOLDS

"Bounding over the ground with a horrible snarl, he soon reached the otter."

devour them, then dived into the lake again for further exploration.

Down to the bottom went Brownie, intent on capturing more of these strange denizens of the deep, when suddenly he made another

taken, and not infrequently a vigorous fight at the end.

Though Brownie knew it not, these big fish were salmon, which had been put into the lake for breeding purposes and were not



to be touched. But Brownie knew no laws save natural ones, and to him all he cared to tackle was fair game. So ardently he chased them, and as they were thoroughly

autumn, sun was once more flooding the golden earth, Brownie crept upon the bank and wandered along till he came to a dense patch in the centre of an osier bed. There,



"Brownie . . . reared and met the dog's spring with bared, angry teeth."

because he couldn't find a better place, he settled down, cleaning his beautiful pelt before he went to sleep.

But when sundown had come and passed, he was out again to make more discoveries in his new-found home. Here in the Great Fish Lake he had found eels and salmon—two truly delicious finds—but the third thing was the most wonderful of all. He saw other otters! All his life up to now Brownie had never imagined that there were others of his kind upon earth except, of course, his own family, and now he was astonished to find,

delicious to his taste, they were quite worth all the trouble he was put to in order to get them—far, far better than any of the other finny inhabitants which lived in the lake.

All that night the otter spent in ceaseless chase, hunting for the sheer joy of the sport; but when day began to dawn, and the



sporting near the rim of the lake, two more otters—what is more, girl-otters!

Suddenly, and quite accountably, Brownie felt less lonely. For two or three minutes he watched them diving, then, deciding he would like to make their acquaintance, he swam towards them. Brownie was no stickler for introductions—Mrs. Grundy is an unknown quantity in the otter world—and making few overtures to see how he would be received, he went up to them and proceeded to join in their games as if he had known them all his life, and, perhaps because they felt flattered at his attentions, the two girl-otters accepted his company.

At any rate, all three immediately became good friends, and plunged and dived about in the waters all that night, and, indeed, for many nights after that, until Brownie suddenly seemed to discover that one was prettier than her sister, and after that he made arrangements to meet her alone.

At first, finding herself alone with him, she was rather disconcerted, but fortunately their embarrassment was soon ended, for a distraction occurred in the middle of Brownie's love-making. A fine fat fish went past, unconscious of their presence.

Now, Brownie did not mean to be rude, I feel sure, but the sight of that fish was altogether too tempting. Instantly he turned his back on his lady-love and watched the fish. And as he did so, an idea came to him, an idea as old as the hills. Here was a fine chance to show off his great powers, if he wanted to. I don't say he did, but, anyhow, he turned round and looked at the fish.

The sudden movement caught the salmon's attention, and, lying like a wraith in the depths of the waters, the fish watched with curious, expressionless eyes, ready to dart at a moment's notice. And dart he did, for next moment Brownie came at him, and after a furious chase caught him. Then with his violently flapping prize in his mouth he brought it up in triumph and shook it proudly before the female otter.

They were two fine children that Brownie and his mate had in the dense patch of osier. The nest was lined with dry grass and other soft material, and was quite near the water's edge. Nobody knew it was there—nobody, that is, except the water-voles which ran through the reeds, and hurried by with fearful glances, and the fishes, perhaps, who, though they knew, had not enough sense to keep away from danger.

Very jealously Brownie watched over that domain. Let someone be heard coming

through the meadows, or the farm dog barking near by, and the otter would vanish into the water with a short whistle to alarm his loved ones, and if the farm dog did get anywhere near to that spot, even if only a second later, he looked down upon a calm and silent lake, with scarcely a ripple to break the smoothness of the surface.

And so, while Brownie assumed the cares and duties of fatherhood, winter came on apace, and the hills and meadows were carpeted with a sheet of snow which gleamed dazzlingly white in the glare of the sun. At first these cold days were happy days for Brownie, for he found a little hillock near the holt, down which he loved to toboggan; but soon his happiness was clouded over as food began to grow scarce, for the Frost King was rampant now. What became of those wonderful salmon I do not know, but certain it is that Brownie sought each night in vain for fish which previously had come so easily to hand. Even his second-best food—the trout and bass and perch—seemed to have gone, and the otters had to content themselves with frogs and such freshwater crustacea as they could find.

December came and the famine grew, till Brownie knew not where to turn to find the wherewithal to fill those three hungry stomachs dependent on him. Fondly he looked down at his two hopefuls, despair in his heart, then suddenly he gave a cry, for to him had come an inspiration. He thought of the farmyard up on the hill little more than a mile away. There, at all events, was food.

The journey to the haunts of man was fraught with peril, but he infinitely preferred danger to death by starvation. So, one evening as the sun sank over the crest of the hills, and the evening star went down in a glory of crimson and gold, he set out for the farm, leaving his family in the nest in the osier bed to await his return.

Over the soft snow went Brownie, leaving his tracks in the white carpet behind him, on and on past hedges and ditches and snow-draped trees, till, emerging from a thick clump of bushes, he found himself quite close to the farmyard fence. Nosing along this for a few yards, he at length found an opening large enough to admit his thin body, and, creeping through, he made for the little hut which instinct told him housed hens.

Squeezing himself through between the boards, he went straight for the nearest fowl and, speedily killing it, proceeded to feast his famished body. When he had



finished he leaped at another, intending to take it back to the osier bed, but as he emerged from the shed, something came down over his head and the light went out, and the next thing that Brownie knew was that he was a prisoner in the hands of man. One of the farm-hands, having seen him enter the fowl-house, had waited outside with a sack and thus effected his capture.

\* \* \* \*

That night, and for many nights after, imprisoned within the hay-room at the end of the cow-house, Brownie lay disconsolately, fretting for his family. True, he got along very well with the farm-hands and with the farmer, who gave him fish and other scraps of food, but there was one with whom he found himself always at enmity, and that was Rags, the bull-terrier. Never once did Rags come into the cow-house without showing hostility and baring his teeth at Brownie. And Brownie, not to be outdone in the display of hostile demonstrations, drew back against the wall, each time his enemy entered, and glared at the dog with angry eyes.

By the farmer himself Brownie was always treated most kindly, for the farmer was a born animal man. He loved the kindred of the wild. He could handle and ultimately tame the most dangerous, and the more difficult they seemed, the more he enjoyed the work of winning them over. Small wonder, then, that under his influence the otter lost some of his ferocity and became gradually something in the nature of a pet. At first Brownie snapped at everybody who came near him, but he was a game little chap, and a brave animal is far easier to tame than a coward, as every naturalist knows. So Brownie soon came to know the hand which fed him, and the farmer, noticing the pleasing change, ordered the men to let the otter have the run of the farm within certain well-defined limits.

Thereafter the otter was allowed to roam as he pleased, and though it would not have been very difficult to escape back to the osier bed if he had so wished, Brownie, so far from being anxious, seemed to have forgotten the family he had left. The horse-pond provided him with all the water he wanted, and with that, though it was foul and muddy, he seemed quite content.

It was while he was gambolling in the small patch which was not covered with ice, that one day, early in the morning, he looked up and received the greatest shock of his life, for there, standing on the other

side of the pond, was his mate. How she came to be there I do not know, but probably the famine had driven her to the farm in the hope of being able to pick up a few odds and ends in the shape of vegetables and what-not for her hungry babes. At any rate, there she was, and the sight of her stirred up in Brownie a great longing—a longing for his life in the wild.

With an excited lash of his sturdy tail he splashed out on to the bank and ran towards her, almost skipping in his joy. He was half-way to her when he suddenly became aware that another besides himself had seen his mate and was even now bearing down on her. It was Rags.

Never had Brownie been on good terms with the terrier, but this just about settled things. With a whistle of warning to the female otter, he stood his ground and faced the foe, while she, uttering cries of fear, ran for shelter. Confident, swaggering, Rags came on; now was his chance to square accounts with this new pet which had in some measure taken his place in his master's heart. Bounding over the ground with a horrible snarl, he soon reached the otter.

For a moment the two foes stood face to face. Who can measure the might of their moving thoughts—the dog urged by his lust for blood, the otter all out to preserve himself and his mate? Then Brownie, with a surprising agility for an animal apparently so ill-adapted for land operations, reared and met the dog's spring with bared, angry teeth, met it like a fury.

For a moment there was a hopeless *mêlée* of dog and otter; then Brownie got home with his teeth upon the dog's nose and, finding himself with a firm grip on soft flesh, he hung on for all he was worth. With a howl of pain Rags reared up in the air, taking Brownie with him; then, managing at last to shake off this little demon which gripped him so mercilessly, he tore across the grass for cover as fast as he could go. And it will be a very long time before Rags interferes with any of the otter tribe again: his recollections of the last encounter will be too unpleasant.

As for Brownie, finding himself the victor, he hurriedly joined his mate, and together they made their way back to their nest in the osier bed, where a great surprise awaited them, for scattered all round the nest, thrown at random on the ground, were fish in plenty, to say nothing of a brave show of vegetables. Evidently the work of some fairy godmother!



"Ah, well," observed the farmer later that day, "'tweren't no manner o' use keeping th' little devil here on the farm. Reckon he must ha' had a mighty tough

time afore he came here. . . I'll see he don't starve in future. But poor old Rags!" And he laughed heartily, as one who is pleased with a good joke.



## THE CHARM.

"The smalle birds warbled their harmonious charmes."—DRAYTON.

**B**IRDS sing at dawn their "charm." Still half at rest  
And in a meditation lulled they seem;  
It is as though their music then expressed  
The dreaming of the dreamer of a dream.

First the thrush calls in one long note subdued  
To mingle with the lone owl's lingering cry.  
'Twixt Dark and Day in Dawn's dim interlude  
Life saith good morrow and the Night good-bye.

Last June the lark sang also. Bird of flame,  
And floating torch of noon, he thrilled afar  
With owl and thrush, but soon the three became  
Silent as though they watched a dying star.

Night faded into daylight. Loudlier then  
The timid birds that to the woods belong,  
The great tit and the warbling willow-wren  
Adventured in my garden their shy song.

Now and again, in his far trees withdrawn,  
The cuckoo called, his note a lovely bell,  
And then upon the gossamer-trellised lawn  
Sudden, the charm being finished, stillness fell.

Later, when sparrows had begun to thrum  
Their pizzicato from their brown guitars,  
I doubted whence that earlier "charm" had come—  
Was it but music drifted from dream-stars?

VICTOR PLARR.





"'Susan!' he said."

# MISS PRIM

By AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

**D**ORIS was lying on the couch. She said in a sing-song voice : " I don't feel at all fit. The world's horrid. Relations never do notice when you are fading away. Perhaps when I am dead——"

" No fear of *you* fading away," said Simon ; " you're too jolly hefty. What's the matter with you ? You sound very whiney-piney. And I'm trying to read."

" I don't feel at all well," said Doris. " I've got"—she raised herself on one elbow, as if making sure of it—" yes, I've got a headache."

" You've got a heartache, my dear, because you quarrelled with Penn," thought

Simon ; but aloud he only said : " Anything a mere brother can do ? "

" Yes, he can take me out in his side-car," said Doris with unexpected promptness. " It would do my head good."

Simon seemed to know how the martyrs felt. " It isn't as warm as it was," he warned.

" It never is," said Doris.

" And half the roads are up."

" How nice for the unemployed ! But don't you think we might find a little one"—she smiled wheedlingly—" that wasn't ? "

The smile was missed by Simon, who wasn't looking, but it seemed to reach his



heart, for he replied : " Oh, all right, then. Get ready for a start."

About two minutes later, her get-up charming, her headache pathetically hinted at by a slight perfume of eau-de-cologne, Doris was ready.

"Heavens, what's come over the girl?" thought Simon; but he said nothing.

"Round by Pettingay's rather pretty," said Doris carelessly.

"Funny, I thought of that way, too," said Simon, with an innocent air. "Which route? Shall we cut through Cross-Lanes?"

"Well, the roads aren't likely to be up there," said Doris.

"No," agreed Simon, "they aren't."

They set forth, Simon rather engagingly ugly and with a determined expression of stupidity; Doris fair and sweet, showing a disinclination for conversation and flaunting an assumption of fragility.

Despite his efforts to the contrary, interest in his job brought its usual expression of alert intelligence back to Simon's face. Despite her attempt at invalidism, the wind whipped colour into Doris's cheeks, giving her the glow of gorgeous health.

As they approached Cross-Lanes: "As we are so near the Bartleys' place, what about calling on them?" Doris cast out by way of spontaneous suggestion. "They would give us tea."

"Not this little child!" said Simon. He reflected upon the connection between the Bartleys and Penn: 'twas more than a connection, a relationship—cousins, they were, of sorts. When he had taken that in: "But if *you'd* like to fall in on 'em, I'll hang about somewhere," he added.

"You might as well—"

But the limit of Simon's good nature seemed to have been reached. "I bar tea-parties," he said firmly. "But I'll meet you anywhere you like in an hour's time." He stopped at a decent distance from the Bartleys' gate.

"Then I think I will call on them," said Doris. With an assumption of hesitation she pushed out one foot; then she found the other and got out. "Don't dash off at once, there's a dear: hang around till I see if they're in. If I'm not back in a minute, then you'll know it's all right, and I'll meet you again in about an hour's time at—do you remember that funny little inn in the main street?—'The Lame Duck' it's called—I'll meet you there, though what you'll do in the meantime—"

"Oh, don't bother about me," said Simon.

She didn't, and as she did not reappear in a minute, Simon thrummed away, making the corner and passing through Cross-Lanes. That inn wasn't "The Lame Duck," but "The Speckled Hen." "Oh, well, that's near enough!" chuckled Simon. He turned into the road to St. Peter's South. Really, it would be hardly decent to have tea at Cross-Lanes; he might as well go on to Pettingay—Doris would never get there now. Simon had—Doris often complained of it—a passion for doing anything he had set out to do.

"Nice road, pretty road," thought Simon contentedly, and slowed down to enjoy it. The road seemed to hear and to be in a capacious mood. At its first bend it showed Simon what it had taken on—repairs of the most uncompromising description.

"Sorry I spoke," said Simon, and swept round to the left into a lane. That proved to be not so rutty, wood-bounded, bosky. "The one trifling drawback being that I don't know where you take me to," said Simon. At that moment a faint cry smote his ear.

At first he was quite sure of it, then he was not so sure; but he stopped, got off the bicycle, listened. Yes, there it was again, less faint, more assertive. It sounded like "Please help," and it came from the wood on his right.

Simon looked at his bicycle doubtfully, then left it. It was easy enough to worm himself through the broken hedge into the wood. The cry came again, and he located it, brushed his way ahead through innumerable brambles, and emerged at length upon a tiny open space. To the left of this was a stile, greatly overgrown, and standing on the stile, one foot on each side, was a girl in a pink frock, in a queer, twisted attitude. It was she who was calling.

And it was easy enough to see what had happened to her. Her hat lay on the ground, and hopelessly twisted in the branches of an overhanging bramble was her hair. She could barely move an inch.

"Is your name Absalom?" asked Simon. His voice was pleasantly reassuring, expressing no surprise at her misadventure, yet promising help.

The girl gave a little gasp. "No, it's Susan Prim. Oh, dear, I've been struggling here for *hours*!"

"You do seem to have put up a fight," said Simon. It was evident that she had—wherever her clothes could be caught and held, they were caught and held;



wherever her hair could be clutched, it was clutched.

"It was my hair that got caught first," said she—she sounded a little hysterical, and no wonder!—"then in trying to get that away my dress got tied up."

"Sort of thing you couldn't do if you tried to do it, isn't it?" remarked Simon. He was climbing up beside her as he spoke. Breaking off a branch, he cast it aside. "I'll soon set you free. Must be horrid to have your head held like this."

She said: "I could only look the one way, and I could just see the lane. I could only hope somebody would come along."

"Bad luck that so few people pass that way," said Simon commiseratingly. A little diffidently he seized an auburn tress and began to disentangle it.

"Oh, several people passed," said she, "but you were the first that looked——"

"Yes?" prompted Simon encouragingly. Nice to know what this pretty girl—for she was quite distractingly pretty, despite so unconventional an arrangement of her hair—thought of him.

"—respectable," concluded she, pursing her lips.

Simon almost fell over. "Do I deserve that?"

"Why, yes, I think you do," said she kindly. "Anyone could see that you weren't a tramp—or a bounder."

"Oh, well, I suppose that's always something," said Simon.

"You needn't be afraid of pulling my hair," said Susan gravely. "I don't see how you can help it."

"I'll try, anyway," said Simon. "It's had a lot of pulling, enough to go on with; better try something else now."

"But I want to catch a train at Cross-Lanes, so we—you—I, I mean, must hurry."

"Now, which *do* you mean?" asked Simon. "There, that's free. Managed that rather well, I think."

"I suppose I mean you," said Susan, after consideration, "as you are kindly setting me free."

"Goodness!" said Simon.

"What's the matter?" she asked anxiously.

"Oh, nothing. I was merely thinking that Prim was a good name."

"You like it? H'm, I'm not sure that I do." She did indeed look a little doubtful.

Simon felt that he would explode with suppressed laughter. Heavens, she simply

couldn't be as prim as she seemed to be, not with that pretty face and with the curl which he was just releasing dangling near it. There! The ringlet fell by her cheek—she was simply IT.

"My name is Pretty—Simon Pretty," he told her.

She said gently: "I don't think Simon a very pretty name."

"Neither do I. You haven't got me. My name is Simon Pretty."

"Oh, I see." She didn't laugh, didn't smile, not a twinkle. Of course he ought to have seen in that added proof of her lack of humour, but he didn't, somehow.

"You're the first person who hasn't laughed at it," he told her.

"Oh, but why?" She opened her eyes wide.

"You can move your head a bit now," said Simon.

She did—away from him. "Oh, how nice!" She breathed a sigh of deep satisfaction.

Simon felt an absurd impulse to tweak the hair and bring the head back again, but this he resisted successfully. "Fraid I'll have to cut this bit," he said sadly. "It would take *hours* to undo it."

"Oh, do!" she said eagerly.

Such eagerness did seem misplaced, and she deserved to have to pay for it. Simon slipped a ringlet into his pocket.

"Madam, you are now free—your head, anyhow," he said.

She moved it and found that this was so. "How lovely!" she breathed. And then: "Thank you ever so much! I think I could do the rest myself."

"And get your hair tied up again?" said Simon crossly. "No, indeed! I'll finish my job, thank you."

She didn't seem to know quite what to make of his crossness, and looked a little worried.

"Serve you right, you worry away!" thought Simon. Aloud he said: "You've missed that train, anyway."

She quite forgot that she hadn't mentioned the time of it. "Oh, have I?" Her brow furrowed. "There isn't another train to Pettingay for ages. Auntie will be ever so upset. I'd better walk."

"If it's Pettingay you want," said Simon in a matter-of-fact tone, "I'm on my way there, and as the side-car's empty at the moment, I can take you with me."

She looked quite horrified at the idea; out of the corner of his eye he could see





"I've been struggling here for hours!"

her. There was no sense of humour anywhere in her, but, all the same, she was a darling.

Before she could invent one of those funny proper speeches of hers, "So that's

settled," said Simon. He settled affairs between the brambles and her frock at the same time, and jumped down.

Before she had taken in the significance of that—she was having too many things to think of at once, poor dear;

Simon was like that—he had lifted her down and set her with a little shake on the

bracken. "The sight that you are! You couldn't go walking about in these rags. It wouldn't be respectable," said Simon.

She looked at her torn frock. "No, I couldn't," she agreed gravely.

A minute or two later she was in the side-car and they were speeding along the lane. "If it does take us a long way round, who cares?" thought Simon.

"This is a pretty lane, and it makes a short cut to Pettingay, doesn't it?" said Susan. "When I have to walk, I choose this way."

Simon frowned, then smiled. "Since we aren't walking, we'd better go back to the high-road."

"Not the slightest need," said Susan. She put a hand on his sleeve to stop him. "This lane is excellent for—for motor-bicycles; a car would be different."

"In what way?" asked Simon. Really he had to be grumpy; he felt sure this was a horribly short cut.

She was had, but in a few moments said: "I rather like cars myself, but lots of people seem to prefer motor-bicycles, and I expect you do."



"Oh, rather!" said Simon ironically. "When my wealthy aunt asked me which I would like to have, I chose a bicycle at once!"

But she only asked in all innocence, "Oh, did you? Why?" and turned to him so charmingly inquiring a countenance that Simon was filled with shame.

"Oh, I'm only rotting," he said.

"Do you live with an aunt, too? How funny!"

Simon's face contorted.

They went into a sitting-room delightfully furnished, and empty. Tea was laid for two, and one had obviously partaken of it.

"Oh, dear," said Susan, "Auntie seems to have had tea and gone out!"

She went to the tiny hall and called "Auntie!"

No reply.



"I'll soon set you free."

After a moment he was able to say with calmness: "I live with my sister Doris, and as we have a married sister with kids, you might say Doris was an aunt."

She puzzled over all this for a moment, then she laughed. "Oh, I see, it's a joke."

"Good for you!" said Simon.

"What a fortunate thing your side-car was empty!" she said presently.

"Wasn't it?" He told her about Doris.

"You've to be back in an hour, and you've spent a lot of time in helping me; you won't have time to have any tea." She was obviously distressed.

"Oh, Doris will wait for me at 'The Speckly Inn' if I'm late," said Simon easily.

"You ought to set me down now and go back," she said quickly. "Yes, you would just do it."

"And even then, tea-less," said Simon. "No, no, don't worry. Doris will wait."

While they still discussed the matter they ran into Pettingay.

"The cottage with the rambler rose on it—there on the left—that is ours," said Susan. She added: "You must come in—Auntie will be so pleased—and have some tea."

"Nice thing—obviously out," thought Simon. He looked at a photograph: 'twas of Susan as a schoolgirl—the same wide-open innocent eyes, the same grave little mouth, and—dash it all—the same ringlets.

"Auntie's out," said Susan in a kind of prompting way. She had returned and had caught him studying the photograph.

Simon knew that tone: it was intended to oust him from his chair and send him



away—regretfully and all that, of course—tea-less.

“Oh, is she? Well, I expect she’ll come back soon,” he said easily. “What about beginning tea? You see, I haven’t much time to spare, and as she seems to have had hers, there doesn’t seem much point in waiting, does there?”

“No, I suppose not,” said Susan. She hesitated, then rang the bell, and, when a small and dainty maid appeared, ordered fresh tea. “And another cup and saucer, Dilly,” said Susan in a staid way.

When Dilly had gone, “A charming girl, this young sister of yours,” said Simon, taking up the photograph.

He saw her colour rise as he glanced at her in the mirror over the mantel-shelf; he also saw her set her mouth primly, then open it to say with a little gasp: “Yes, isn’t she? She seems to be out, too; perhaps she’ll come back before you go.”

“And make things even more respectable!” thought Simon, with a chuckle. But he only said gravely: “Let us hope she hasn’t got tied up somewhere—by the hair.”

“Why should she?” demanded Susan suspiciously.

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Simon, setting down the photograph. “Only she seems to have a lot of hair—such nice ringlets, too, quite like yours.”

“She is rather like me,” said Susan stiffly. “Here’s tea.”

Simon sank into a chair, watched her pour out, took a cup and sipped. “Delicious,” he said.

Susan looked pleased. “Dilly does know how to make tea,” she said.

She was unbending just the tiniest bit; he must be careful not to frighten her. Her eyes were the loveliest shade of blue, and they stared so openly yet in such a shy way, like the eyes of a child. “A sense of humour,” thought Simon, “isn’t everything. After all, few children have it, and most children are adorable.”

Meanwhile he munched. “Did Dilly make the cakes, too?” he asked. “They’re simply scrum.”

Susan peered over to see what kind of cake he was eating. “Oh, I made those. Auntie made the other ones. Dilly made the scones.”

“And what does the little sister make?” asked Simon mischievously.

She was quite obviously casting about in her mind for a reply. “Oh, Betty doesn’t care for cooking,” she said.

“I’m afraid *she’ll* never find a husband,” said Simon gravely.

Susan opened her mouth; but she couldn’t meet that attack and she side-tracked. She took a bun and bit into it, then said: “I’m ever so ragged, but I thought—I thought I’d better not keep you waiting while I changed, as you’re in rather a hurry.”

Simon sighed. “I’m going to forget that I’m in a hurry, just for two minutes. This is such an adventure. And adventures are lovely, aren’t they?”

He seemed to have struck a kindred spirit. Susan’s eyes sparkled. “Yes, they are,” she breathed.

“Well, you’ve had one, too, haven’t you?” said Simon.

“So I have.” She blushed, but was elated.

“And your ragged frock,” said Simon, “keeps the adventure in mind. I wouldn’t have you wear another for anything.”

“It does, doesn’t it?” she agreed happily. Then said in a generous tone: “You’ve got one tear yourself—in your coat just by the elbow.”

Simon felt: he had, indeed—a horrible rent. A good coat spoilt. Simon repressed a groan. But she had been perfectly sincere in her generosity. He said as happily as he could: “So I have. What luck!”

“I wish there were more adventures,” said Susan innocently. “In books people have such a lot. But, of course, some adventures might be horrid.”

“Oh, there are lots of nice ones,” said Simon. “Let’s try and find another.”

But something frightened her. “But you’re in a hurry,” she told him.

“Oh, so I am. No use trying to forget it,” said Simon. A glance at his watch told him he must go. He caught Susan studying a diminutive clock on a bracket. “Oh, that’s fast,” said he. “Still, I must be off. Well, when I come next time——”

“Oh!” said Susan.

“What does that mean?” demanded Simon. “Do you want me to say just good-bye and thank you, and there’s an end to the adventure?”

She was silent, torn betwixt desire and decorum. She said at last, her eyes grave, while the ringlet at her cheek danced: “Oh, come again some day and meet Auntie.”

“And the little sister,” said Simon.

She gave him an unexpectedly quick glance, and so caught the little twinkle in his eye. Her own eyes fell, then she turned on him. “And now,” she said angrily, “you’ll think that I invented *both* of them!”



But I didn't! I have an Auntie, and I didn't know she was going to be out."

"No, I'm sure you didn't," said Simon soothingly. "But I wish you had known. We needn't have hurried home like that; we might have had another adventure."

"She's quite real," said Susan plaintively.

"Why, of course she is," said Simon. "I knew all along that Auntie was real, and of course I saw that you invented the little sister as a joke."

Susan looked a little dazed, then caught at it. "A joke—yes, that's what it was. I like jokes, don't you?"

"You don't know one when you see one, my dear little bundle," thought Simon, but he nodded and said "Rather!"

Susan smiled entrancingly. Then she said in rebuke: "But you keep on forgetting that you're in a hurry, and you'll keep your sister waiting ever so long." She moved toward the door.

Simon had to do so, too. "Good-bye, Miss Prim," he said softly.

"Good-bye, Mr. Pretty," said she, and it was obvious that her smile was not suggested by his name.

("Nice of her, with my ugly phiz staring her in the face!") thought Simon.)

He hesitated, and she said, "We'll be here till the end of next month," in a shy tone.

"Hurrah!" said Simon, and sped away.

He returned to Cross-Lanes at a tearing rate, and was told at "The Speckled Hen" that a lady and gentleman had just called for him, had not waited a moment, but had set off for the station.

"Well, I'm dashed!" Simon said to himself indignantly.

He set off in the direction in pursuit, but did not go far. Ahead of him he could discern the figure of Doris, and with her—yes, without a doubt, with her was Penn Graves.

"She must have met him at the Bartleys'," was Simon's first reflection as he turned back.

His second was, "And the ingratitude of her! Didn't wait a minute for me, she didn't! And I shortening my gorgeous time for her, dragging myself away from the loveliest, sweetest girl——"

His third was a benevolent "Oh, well, let 'em go back to Town together, the dears—I don't want them."

And alone he skimmed the scented roads and lanes.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Doris reached home at length, he was lying on his back, reading

"Hullo!" said she.

Simon looked up. "I'm wondering," he said, "were this afternoon's proceedings real or only a blissful dream?"

"Both," said Doris.

"I'm inclined to think so," he agreed.

"I'm—I'm sorry I missed you," began Doris.

"Oh, it's all right," dismissed Simon.

"I saw your backs."

"Really, you're rather sweet sometimes, Simon," said Doris.

Simon looked keenly interested. "Do you think another kind of girl might think so, a *nice* girl?"

"Thank you!" said Doris.

"Oh, you know what I mean. Let me tell you, old girl." He told her of the adventure, lovingly, and in detail.

"Humph! I don't think you can have worried about me much," commented she.

"Oh, never mind that," said Simon impatiently. "After all, *you* can't say much. But don't you think——"

"She sounds nice," said Doris doubtfully.

"Yes, she does sound nice. But do you think she has much—er—sense of humour?"

"She has something—I don't know what it is," said Simon, "something that is quite as good, or better. It makes her simply irresistible."

Doris said: "Oh, well, that doesn't leave much to be said, does it?"

\* \* \* \* \*

An unexpected stroke of fortune in a business way took Simon out of Town for a fortnight. He decided against writing to Susan; as he expressed it to himself, he might "get up against the Prim" in her. But when he returned to Town, down to Pettingay he sped. He bore a book or two for "Auntie," and some chocolates for Susan. It was disconcerting, therefore, to find the cottage deserted, its occupants flown. The post office would not divulge an address, and no one in the village seemed able to supply one.

"And you said you would be there till the end of next month, oh, cruel Susan!" thought Simon, as he made his way back to Town. But eventually he absolved her from any intention to deceive; he felt sure she had proffered the information in good faith. Something unexpected had happened.

Susan had faded into the blue. "But not thus," said Simon to his blotting-pad, "is the love of an honest man balked." He wrote to Susan, addressing his letter to the Pettingay address. In one corner of it



was inscribed the courteous request "Please forward." Its recipient was to be "Miss Susan Prim." "Dear little name! Seems a pity to meddle with it," said Simon to himself. But he meant to, all the same.

Alas, no reply came. At the end of a month Susan was still coyly remote, and she seemed likely to remain so.

"In nice books sisters always help their brothers," said Simon to Doris.

Doris was studying patterns: to Simon it appeared that she had done nothing else since the day had been fixed. She detached her interest from them for a moment. "I do look about everywhere for your Susan," she said, "but how can I find a girl I've never seen."

"Goodness, as if I had not described her often enough!" moaned Simon.

"Yes, you have," agreed his sister. "But then your descriptions—why, there isn't a girl on the face of the globe could live up to them!"

"She's exactly like her name—that ought to describe her," said Simon triumphantly.

"Susan Prim," repeated Doris. "I wonder if that was her real name?"

Simon said with great emphasis: "Why, of course it is! She just couldn't be anything else."

"Oh, perhaps," said Doris.

\* \* \* \* \*

Then one day, while on the top of a 'bus going down Parliament Street, he caught sight of her turning the corner into Bridge Street. She was in the distance, but Simon was quite certain the slight neatly-poised figure was that of his Susan.

Down the steps he flew. The conductor stopped the 'bus. Simon was about to explain firmly that he didn't mean to get off till nearer the corner, when there was a hold-up. Off he leaped, and the conductor's fury was not aroused.

But he could find no trace of her when he reached the corner and turned it. There were so many folks about: the hour was unfortunate. He had it in his mind that she had gone into the Tube, and there he searched. But no luck.

Where she had been once she might be again, he told himself. Not a great hope of it—just a little, enough, anyhow, to set his heart beating. For three consecutive days he was at the same spot at the same hour, but without reward.

"I've got an idea," Doris said suddenly. "Why not advertise? You know those advertisements in the papers, 'Return at

once to your heart-broken Reggie,' and all that kind of thing."

Simon, whose face had lighted with hope, became again downcast. "No use. Susan doesn't read those things," he said.

"How do you know?" Doris demanded.

"Oh, I know she doesn't," said Simon.

\* \* \* \* \*

The next day was a Sunday. Spurred less by hope than boredom, Simon made his way on foot down Parliament Street. And then in the distance he saw her. There was a glint of colour in her gown that would help him to find her. There weren't many people about, either.

And find her he did quite easily.

"Susan!" he said.

She was crossing the bridge, and turned in surprise. She wore rather a demure hat, but the ringlet was still bobbing, and about her lips played a queer, tremulous little smile.

"Mr. Pretty!" she exclaimed.

"I went down to the cottage, and you weren't there," said Simon accusingly. He walked on with her.

She seemed taken aback by his reproachful tone. "Auntie was ill—soon after the—the adventure, so we came to Town," she faltered.

"And I wrote to you," said Simon.

"Didn't you get the letter?"

She nodded. "You see, Auntie was in hospital, and I waited." She seemed to think he would understand why she waited. "She's still in hospital—there's been an operation—but she's getting better now."

"Poor little girl!" said Simon.

She knew it wasn't meant for Auntie. "It has been a horrid time," she admitted, her lip trembling.

"And if you had let me know, I could have helped you a bit," said Simon, "cheered you up, anyway. However, we'll leave that. You did mean to let me know eventually, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes." Her eyes suddenly lighted. Simon's heart danced.

He saw her to the door of the hospital, hung about, and met her as she came out.

"Oh, you shouldn't have waited!" she cried. "I said I would write, didn't I?"

"Well, it occurred to me," said Simon sternly, "that you didn't say *when* you would write."

He saw her home, and so made sure of the address.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some weeks later she said to him: "I



don't really like Prim as a name ; some of the people at the boarding-house laugh at it."

"Oh, I shouldn't mind *them*," said Simon ; "they're jealous."

She shook her head. "I sometimes think I should like to spell it with two 'm's.'"

"Don't," said Simon. "That's only a half-measure. Change it, Susan, change it for Pretty. But, of course, you're going to, otherwise you're leading me on."

Susan's lips parted, the ringlet danced, she hesitated in confusion.

"You could spell it with two 't's,'" said Simon.

She looked up then. "But isn't it usually two 't's'?" she faltered.

"Darling Susan!" said Simon, and kissed her.

Even Susan seemed to see the point of that.

\* \* \* \* \*

Not many people have discovered that Mrs. Pretty has not a sense of humour, and everybody thinks her a darling.

Simon finds that—sooner or later—she manages to see his jokes, any that matter. For the rest, she has the sweetest smile in the world and a dancing ringlet. Simon knows that that smile will always be sweet even when the ringlet is grey.



## A LONDON ROSE SONG.

**R**OSSES, roses, who'll buy roses?

Roses, lady? Buy them here:

White for day-dreams, red for gay dreams,

Red or white for love, my dear.

Roses, roses, lady, roses?

Fragrant roses, fine and fair:

White for sad dreams, red for mad dreams,

Red or white to crown your hair.

Roses, sir? Nice roses, roses?

Choose your fancy, that or this:

White for new dreams, white for true dreams,

But a red rose for a kiss!

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



# THREE TO ONE

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

**D**R. ERIC WILDER—late of Dalston, now of Hayesford—was in unusually good spirits as he stepped into his small and somewhat dilapidated motor-car. The car reminded him so forcibly of Dalston that he had a vision of the dull road in which he had lived, and of the endless dreary streets in which he had conducted a laborious practice with exiguous financial results. Hayesford had, as yet, proved no gold mine, but he could at least breathe and sleep in its wholesome atmosphere; and though he had found it, during the winter months, slow, stolid, and insolently muddy, with the coming of Spring it presented a new and inspiring aspect. The land of orchards awoke to life and blossom.

His first call was at a farmhouse not more than three hundred yards from his own door. It was a late Tudor building, and stood almost flush with the road, a fact that gave colour to the tradition that it had once been an inn in the brave days when Hayesford had been of some importance in the world; now it was only of importance to itself. The Doctor jumped out of his car and knocked at the door. It was opened by a lean, grey-haired, bright-eyed little woman who gave the impression that she was always about to pounce on something.

"Well," he said, "how's the patient to-day?"

"Tarr'ble peevish," said Mrs. Batson. "What creatures men be, for sure, when they ail a bit!" As the Doctor followed her into the hall, she made a dart at a puppy, picked him up and shut him, protesting, into the kitchen. "Allus follows me out, that young thing, though he knows he's no business in the hall. . . . As I was sayin', Doctor, men—"

"If that's Dr. Wilder," came a voice from above, "send un up quick, Ellen. Don't waste his time talkin'."

"There you be!" said Mrs. Batson. "What did I tell 'ee? 'Tis soothin' syrup Mr. Whateley needs."

The Doctor ascended a broad staircase and tapped at a door on the right.

"Come in, come in!" Wilder smiled and entered the room.

"I won't say that I'm glad to see 'ee," the farmer said, "for that'd be a lie. What I want to see is the back of 'ee, for good, except in a friendly way, of course."

"I don't complain of that. . . . But who said you might get out of bed and sit in that chair?"

"I said it myself," said Whateley, in a defiant tone that yet had a touch of apprehension in it. "Don't say I must lie on my back any longer. It nigh sends me daft."

Whateley was sitting by the window in an immense armchair. He was wrapped in a bright blue dressing-gown with red trimmings, and on his head was a smoking-cap that had apparently belonged to some ancient ancestor. He was built on large and broad lines.

"A man who's just recovering from a sharp attack of pleurisy," the Doctor said sternly, "has no business to run risks."

"But where's the risk?" the farmer pleaded. "I'm as warm as a toast, an' here I can look out o' window and see what's goin' on in the world."

The prospect from the window certainly commanded the world as it was represented by Hayesford: almost the entire village was in sight. Over the low roofs of the cottages opposite the Doctor saw the Blue Boar Inn, with great elms at either side of the door and benches placed in their shade. An irregular line of cottages clustered round one side of the green, and almost facing Whateley's was another farmhouse, not so imposing, but more spick-and-span, with newly-painted window frames and gates. At the western end of the green, standing alone, was a smaller house set in a considerable garden enclosed by a brick wall. The whole village was surrounded by a pink foam of apple blossom.

The two men, gazing out of the window,



saw a girl emerge from the smaller house and walk slowly into the garden. Each drew a deep breath as though suddenly they had become aware of Spring.

"A wonderful morning," the Doctor said.

"Right 'nough for you," said Whateley. "But what good is it to me, shut up here same as a stray donkey in a pound? See here, Doctor, can't you get me out quick? Haven't you any sort of a cure that'd work like lightnin'? You chaps have all manner o' tricks up your sleeves."

The Doctor smiled. "I'm not a conjuror," he said.

The farmer looked at him as though he considered the statement to be incredible. "I'll pay 'ee well," he said. The Doctor became nettled.

"My fees are ordinary fees," he said, "and I do my best for everybody. I don't specialise in pretending to cure idiots."

"That's good!" Whateley said, with a grin. "But, all the same, curin' Trapp over yonder's the same as curin' an idiot, isn't it?" He gazed fixedly at the spick-and-span house at the opposite side of the green.

"My dear man, Trapp's no more an idiot than you are. And, anyway, he's not cured yet."

"He's nearer to it than me, isn't he?"

"Well, yes. You see, Mr. Whateley, he had the intelligence, or reasonableness, to follow my first instructions. If he hadn't, I might have had two pleurisy cases on my hands."

The farmer blinked. "'Tis a pity," he said, "that you an' me couldn't have arranged things better atween us."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, if you'd said it was pleurisy for Trapp—"

"Well, what then?" the Doctor demanded.

"It might have bin an easier game for me," said Whateley. Again both the farmer and the Doctor were looking at the Spring-like figure in the "garden enclosed."

"What the deuce is all this about?" the Doctor asked.

"Oh, nothin'! Just tootle away in your little old car. No doubt Trapp's waitin' for 'ee."

Wilder found Mrs. Batson—who was a kind of derelict cousin of Whateley's—waiting in the hall.

"Found un pleurish, as I said, didn't 'ee?" she asked.

"A little. Why is he in such a hurry to get out?"

"All men's the same," said Mrs. Batson. "Make 'em comfortable, an' they'll complain. Leave 'em to look after themselves, an' they're worse than babies. 'Tis my belief they'd grumble at their own funerals if they could raise a voice."

"No doubt," the Doctor said. "But you haven't answered my question, Mrs. Batson."

"Your question? What might that have bin?"

"Never mind," Wilder said, "it doesn't matter. Look after him as well as you've done so far, and I'll call you a good nurse. Nurses have to put up with a lot."

"An' well I know it," Mrs. Batson said. "Sims to me, Doctor, that men allus have somethin' on their minds—either what they want to do an' daren't, or what they've done an' wish they hadn't."

"I expect you're about right," said the Doctor. He got into his car under the watchful eyes of Mrs. Batson, who seemed inclined to pounce on that venerable machine as she had pounced on the offending puppy.

"Well, good mornin'," she said from the doorstep. "I wouldn't trust meself in that thing. But there, men——"

Wilder started the car and glided out of range of Mrs. Batson's voice.

## II.

THE Doctor had the impression that he was being watched by the entire village, which was, of course, absurd. Nevertheless, he had an impulse to pay his next call in a village two miles away, leaving Trapp till his return. But that, he reflected, would be a sign of feebleness. And, after all, a doctor was more or less a public character, and could not reasonably complain if people kept an eye on him. So he steered to the right and drove very slowly towards the house that stood at the end of the green. The girl was leaning over the gate; her uncovered hair shone in the sunlight like the skin of a newly-stripped horse-chestnut. Wilder was more conscious of her hair than of her face—that was merely pretty, but the hair was wonderful. He raised his hat.

"A lovely morning, Miss Winterborne," he said.

"Lovely. Will you come in and see father for a moment?"

"I hope he isn't ill?"



"I don't think there's much wrong with him," said the girl.

She walked up the path to the house slightly in advance of Wilder, who, to his own surprise, felt a little embarrassed. But it was an exhilarating embarrassment, and he wished that the path extended for a mile instead of fifty yards. His acquaintance with Janet Winterborne had hitherto been of the slightest: they had first met at a concert in the village hall soon after his arrival in Hayesford. He had sung rather well, and she had played the violin very indifferently. She had not impressed him particularly, but now, with the Spring sunshine on her hair, she seemed to have become a different creature—the divinity of the garden in whom its fragrance lived.

"How is Mr. Whateley?" she asked, as they reached the door. The farmer's name recalled the Doctor to his professional senses.

"Much better. He'll soon be about again if he doesn't play the fool." He glanced up at Whateley's window. "He's probably watching us now."

"Play the fool? Watching us now?" Janet said, with a puzzled contraction of the eyebrows.

"I don't mean," said Wilder, smiling, "to associate those two statements. He wants to get out in too much of a hurry. He's not a very manageable man. When I called this morning I found him sitting by the window instead of being in bed. But I shouldn't give away my patients, Miss Winterborne."

"I don't call that giving them away." She opened the front door, led him to a room on the left of a narrow hall, said, "Here's Dr. Wilder, father," and left him.

Owen Winterborne rose and held out his hand. He was a tall man with grizzled hair, and dark eyes that seemed to regard the world with suspicion. He had come to the village from the neighbouring town of Ashworth at about the same time as the Doctor had come from Dalston to take up his present practice. Winterborne had been a successful builder and contractor, and had retired, local rumour said, with "a mort o' money."

"I'm sorry that you need my services," Wilder said. "What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing."

"Then why——"

"Sit down, sit down. . . . I'm as fit as a fiddle." The Doctor sat down and waited. Dalston had provided him with some strange experiences, but never with a patient

who proclaimed himself to be no patient at all.

"I'm as fit as a fiddle," Winterborne repeated, "but my daughter isn't. At any rate, so it seems to me."

"Has she complained of feeling unwell?"

"No, she hasn't. If she had, I'd feel easier in my mind."

"Then you wish me to examine her, Mr. Winterborne?"

"That's just what I don't want."

"Then how," asked the astonished Doctor, "can you expect me to be of any use?"

The other's tone grew confidential. "I thought," he said, "that you, being a clever man, as I hear all round, could find out what's wrong without her knowing about it. Come in as a friend now and then, and keep an eye on her. I'll pay you for your visits."

Wilder pondered. "This is rather an extraordinary proposition," he said at last. "You don't suspect that she has any—any mental disability?"

"Good Heavens, no!"

"I'm glad of that. Of course I'll come, and keep my eyes open—delighted to. But I couldn't think of taking fees in such a case."

"But you take fees from Whateley and Trapp and all the rest of 'em."

"That's altogether different," said the Doctor. "You'll oblige me by saying nothing more about fees. I'll come in this evening, if I may."

"Very good. A game of cards, or dominoes, and a glass of something."

Janet was again in the garden when Wilder left the house. He approached her with a new interest, and also with a sense of perplexity. She looked as healthy a young creature as any on whom his discriminating and professional eyes had rested. No doubt, he reflected, her father was morbidly solicitous about his one ewe lamb.

"Well, Doctor, what's the verdict?" Janet asked.

"You were quite right—there's not much wrong with him. I'll look in again this evening." The girl gave him a glance—not startled, but undoubtedly, he thought, inquiring—which added to his perplexity.

"That doesn't sound as though there wasn't much wrong with him," she said.

"It won't be a professional visit." He felt decidedly ashamed of himself. "Just for a game and a chat."

"You're not deceiving me about him, Doctor?"



"I assure you I'm not."

Wilder's next call was on Peter Trapp. Trapp's mother, who kept house for him, was as taciturn as Mrs. Batson was voluble. She never spoke for the sake of speaking, and didn't speak at all when a nod or gesture could convey her meaning. The Doctor repeated his formula: "Well, how's the patient to-day? Better?"

Mrs. Trapp nodded and pointed up the staircase. Wilder took the stairs two at a

curious. He put to Peter the question that he had put to Whateley:

"Who told you that you might get out of bed and sit in that chair?"

"I told myself, Doctor. Besides, if Whateley can sit by his window, why shouldn't I?"

Wilder crossed the room and looked out of the window. "If you can see him from here," he said, "your eyes are better than mine." He looked down at Trapp and saw,



"The girl was leaning over the gate; her uncovered hair shone in the sunlight."

time—which was, perhaps, hardly professional—and knocked at Trapp's door.

"Come in!" Peter's voice was harsh, with a tendency to creakiness in the upper notes, quite different from Whateley's booming bass. Peter was a short, slim man, with reddish hair and a freckled face, and his eyes would have been described locally as "ferrety." Trapp, like Whateley, was sitting by his bedroom window in an arm-chair. The coincidence struck Wilder as

on the window ledge close to his hand, a pair of field-glasses. "Oh," he added, "that's how you manage it, is it? So you've been spying on Whateley." He spoke lightly, though he felt indignant.

"I s'pose," Trapp said, "that a man may squint through his own glasses? There's little enough to do, stuck up here. An' what do 'ee mean by spyin'? What's it to me whether Whateley's upstairs or downstairs, indoors or out?"



Wilder, being unable to answer satisfactorily, didn't attempt to answer at all.

"You take me too seriously," he said. "Of course, from my point of view, there's no reason why you shouldn't use the glasses." He took them up and used them himself, first directing them towards Winterborne's garden, which was commanded from Trapp's upper windows just as it was by Whateley's from the other side of the village. And as he focussed that pleasant and blossomy enclosure in which he had, a few minutes before, been talking with Janet, it occurred to him that Peter might have been a witness of that little episode, as, indeed, he had been.

"What's wrong at Winterborne's?" Trapp asked.

Wilder laid down the glasses and stared at his patient. "It seems to me," he said, "that everyone in Hayesford is too thundering curious about everyone else's business."

"That may be, Doctor," Peter said. "I bet, now, that Whateley asked how I was gettin' on?"

"He did."

"An' you told him, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did," Wilder admitted.

"Then how's *he* gettin' on?"

"Just about as well as you are," said the Doctor.

"Goin' to let him out soon?"

"Not for a few days."

"But you can let me out before that, can't 'ee?" Peter asked anxiously.

"I'll see how you get on. Why are you two men in such a deuce of a hurry to get out?"

"So he's in a hurry, too, is he?"

"He seems to be," said Wilder.

"Ah! Well, you see, 'tis Ashworth cattle fair on Monday, an' we both want to be there. Some fine beasts'll be on sale that day."

"I see," said Wilder. "You're business rivals and want equal chances of buying."

"Rivals—that's it," Trapp said, and his gaze wandered towards the enclosed garden. Wilder would probably have accepted this explanation if Peter's gaze had wandered in any other direction, but when it fixed itself on that garden he jumped at another explanation. It might be true that his two patients were rivals in business, and that the cattle fair was an important matter, but were they not rivals, possibly, in a more important matter, the object of that rivalry being Janet Winterborne? It was not unnatural that each, being temporarily

debarred from activity of body, should suddenly be stirred into activity of sentiment.

"Well, I wish you both luck," Wilder said at last. "As your medical adviser I can't do less and I can't do more."

"That's fair, anyway," Peter said. "Your trade must bring you up with some queer folks."

"It does. That's part of the fun of it."

"Fun, seein' sick people all day and maybe half the night?"

"They aren't all so bad as they think they are."

"P'raps it's like that at Winterborne's." Peter said this so quietly and so adroitly that the Doctor was almost taken off his guard. But he pulled himself up in time.

"I don't think so," he said. "It may be a serious matter."

"Then I've got that much out of you," Trapp said.

"Yes, just that much."

"I like a cautious man."

"So do I, when he's ill," said the Doctor. He smiled benevolently on Peter, shook hands with him, and left him still sitting at his window with the field-glasses within reach.

Mrs. Trapp met the Doctor at the foot of the stairs, and this time she spoke.

"Better?" she asked, with a jerk of the thumb towards Peter's room.

"Yes, decidedly. But don't let him go out yet. We mustn't run any risks." Mrs. Trapp compressed her lips and nodded.

Wilder got into his car and paid his remaining visits in neighbouring hamlets and villages. There was no longer any doubt in his mind as to the more active cause of rivalry between the two farmers, but neither of them seemed an altogether desirable partner for Janet. They were both much older than she, and lacking in the kind of refinement which it seemed necessary to associate with that wonderful hair which crowned, as it were, the divinity of the garden enclosed. And then Wilder himself became disposed towards sentiment. Why shouldn't he make a third in the rivalry? He was under no obligation to his patients in matters of the heart.

### III.

THAT evening was one of the strangest in Dr. Eric Wilder's experience. Directly he crossed the threshold of Winterborne's house for the second time he knew that he should have declined his host's unsatis-



factory invitation. The situation, at the best, was invidious. There was a suspicious air about the thing that he didn't like: the whole atmosphere of Hayesford seemed, on that day, to be heavy with suspicion. He himself was suspicious, and the sentiment which he had found so pleasing in the morning now took on a rather different aspect. Somehow, he felt, he wasn't quite playing the game.

Nor could he play dominoes. Janet was busy over needlework and didn't want to play cards, and, after all, for the domestic circle there are no three-handed card games of much interest. Wilder, who was an excellent chess player, hated dominoes. It was, he considered, a game too obviously mechanical and mathematical. Winterborne always won, and the Doctor, according to his promise, kept an eye on Janet. Her hair by lamp-light was not quite so wonderful.

During play the Doctor said very little: he conjectured, rightly, that Winterborne took even the smallest matters in deadly earnest. When refreshments were produced from a corner-cupboard by Janet, and arranged on the table in place of the dominoes, he began to feel more cheerful.

"Don't you find Hayesford very dull?" the girl asked.

"I did at first," he said, "but never so dull as Dalston. Now I'm beginning to find it quite lively."

"Of course you see a lot of people."

"But I guess it can't be over-lively seeing a lot of sick people," Winterborne said.

"I assure you," said Wilder, "that some of them are particularly lively—too lively, in fact."

"Wheateley's lively enough when he's well," Winterborne said, "but Trapp's never what you'd call that. Trapp's a sound man, all the same."

"From the physical point of view, entirely sound."

"I didn't mean that. Every man to his trade, of course. When I say sound I mean in the matter of money."

"Yes, yes, I understand," said the Doctor. He was getting frightfully bored again, and Janet wouldn't help him out, wouldn't give him an opening. And then, he reflected, there was no reason why she should. He felt himself hopelessly entangled in some little drama that meant nothing to him. He was getting mixed up again. Whose doctor was he, or was he a doctor at all?

"I wasn't thinking of either Wheateley or Trapp," he said at last. "By the way, a patient of mine, near Ashworth, inquired after you to-day."

"Name o' what?" Winterborne demanded.

"Manser."

If one of the dominoes had suddenly exploded, the effect could hardly have been more startling. Winterborne grew purple in the face, clenched his hands, and cursed under his breath. Janet became pale and shot a nervous glance at the Doctor.

"A wicked man, that," Winterborne stuttered. "Got me down on a score of contracts. . . . And he had the face to ask after me?"

"Was he, then, a rival of yours?" Wilder asked. "I begin to think that everyone in this neighbourhood is a rival of everybody else." He looked at Janet. No, her prettiness was not so effective now as it had been in the sunlight. Nevertheless, he was really more interested in her than he had been in the morning. Why had the blood left her face at the mention of Manser's name?

Wilder was about to take his leave, earlier than he had intended, when a mild knocking called Janet to the front door. The Doctor's imagination fixed itself on Manser. His eyes, however, a moment later, were fixed on Wheateley, who entered the room with an apologetic air.

"Well, I'm——" said Wilder.

"Don't say that," Wheateley said, "though it may be true. 'Tis a world o' mystery, Doctor, an' you didn't look all you might 'a' done this mornin'. A touch o' cold, maybe. Mrs. Batson's got a won'erful cure for colds—makes it herself out o' weeds an' sich. She'd give 'ee a bottle."

"I'm sure she would," Wilder said.

"I couldn't stop in a lovely evenin' like this," said Wheateley. By this time he had seated himself near the table, and, at the invitation of Winterborne, said that he wouldn't mind having a little whisky.

"All right, go ahead," said the Doctor. "But as a patient I give you up. If you want to die—die!" Janet had not yet returned. Once more Wilder was on the point of going when a second knock announced another visitor. This time it was Peter Trapp. Janet followed him into the room, and the Doctor observed that her eyes were sparkling. Was it with amusement? She resumed her seat and took up her needlework. Wilder was puzzled,



amused, and also professionally annoyed. Wouldn't anyone take hold of the situation?

Trapp, with a ferrety glance at Whateley

junctions not to go out," said the Doctor. "I give the pair of you up." Whateley and Trapp exchanged a defiant glance, and then both looked intently at Wilder.

"They're a long way from being dead," Winterborne said.

"You can never tell," said the Doctor, "in such cases as I've been treating for my friends here. A sudden heart attack—angina pectoris, and all that. One never knows." He was fooling his disobedient patients cheerfully, and, glancing at Janet, he saw that she understood he was merely playing a game much more interesting than dominoes.

Trapp looked startled; he blinked, but Whateley remained entirely unperturbed.

"Heart attacks, eh?" he said.

"Why, you might be taken wi' one o' that sort yourself, Doctor. I'll speak to Mrs. Batson 'bout heart attacks; she'll maybe have a cure for them, too."



"If Trapp started the bidding, Whateley ran him up."

and a nod to Wilder, sat down. He, like Whateley, replied to Winterborne's inquiry that he wouldn't mind having a little whisky.

"There's no good," said Trapp, addressing himself to the Doctor, "tellin' me that I mustn't go out when I know I can."

"All right," said Wilder. "If you want to die—die!"

"If Mr. Whateley there's fit to be about, why ain't I?"

"I gave Mr. Whateley strict in-



"It's a wonder," said Wilder, "that she hadn't a cure for your complaint, and then you needn't have called me in."

"To tell 'ee the truth," said Whateley with great gravity, "Mrs. Batson's cures don't seem to work proper on

situation, to some extent at least, became clear to him. Both Whateley and Trapp wanted Janet—whether there was much love in either case didn't, for the moment, matter. Whateley had suddenly made up his mind to steal a march on Trapp, and Trapp had determined to steal a march on Whateley. That was why they had disobeyed his orders, and that accounted for their almost simultaneous appearance in Winterborne's sitting-room. Did Janet care for either of the men?

He couldn't believe that she did: neither, anyway, was



"Each had his backers, and cries of 'Go it, Trapp!' 'Good old Whateley!' sardonically delivered, urged them on."

me. She says it's because I don't put faith in 'em."

"That's it, probably," said the Doctor. He rose, shook hands with the three men, and was escorted to the front door by Janet. They stood together in the dimly-lighted hall for a moment.

"Don't speak to father of Mr. Manser," she said. "There was always a feud between them—he can't bear the man's name. And he thinks——" She stopped short.

"He thinks——" Wilder repeated.

"Never mind, that doesn't matter," she said.

The Doctor walked slowly and contemplatively to his own house. The moon was two days from the full, the air was exquisitely soft, and Hayesford seemed a haven of peace. It was a night to evoke sentiment, and the Doctor thought of Janet almost tenderly.

Going over the events of the day, the

good enough for her—Wilder was certain of that. Then there was the explosion about Manser; Winterborne might be obsessed to the point of madness on the subject of Manser. And what did Janet's unfinished sentence mean? There remained the still more puzzling question: why did Winterborne imagine that his daughter required this vague medical supervision?

The Doctor did not call again on his refractory patients because, apparently,



there was no necessity. On the following morning both seemed to have put off the invalid completely, and to have resumed the avocations of health.

On the Friday before Ashworth cattle fair Wilder saw Janet walking in the enclosed garden again. She needed, he told himself, open air and sunshine to complete her prettiness; then it became almost beauty, and her hair fascinated him. He opened the gate and went forward to meet her.

"How's your father, Miss Winterborne?" he asked.

"Quite well, so far as I can see. But, then, I'm not a doctor."

"As I told you, there's nothing much wrong with him." Janet, Wilder fancied, looked tired.

"Those two queer patients of yours are cured?" she said, with a somewhat baffling smile.

"They seem to be. Their blood be upon their own heads!"

"Are you going in to see father now?"

"I thought I'd just drop in," Wilder said, though when he opened the gate he had had no such intention. She stopped and bent down to pluck an early rose. Then she straightened herself, sniffed the blossom, and said—

"I suppose you know it's Ashworth fair on Monday?"

"Of course—everybody's talking about it."

"I do so want to go," Janet said.

"Then why on earth don't you go?"

"Because father objects. He almost keeps me a prisoner in this garden."

Wilder was startled. Was Winterborne, he asked himself, really mad? "May I ask why?"

"Because of the Manser feud."

"Is he afraid that you'll be kidnapped? This is utterly absurd. . . . Let me take you to Ashworth fair in my car."

"If you could get him to consent——"

"I'll take you if he doesn't consent, if you're keen on going."

"You're very, very kind," she said. "I am keen on going. It's one of the few excitements in the dull year's round."

Wilder went into the house and saw Winterborne. He came to the point at once.

"Miss Winterborne," he said, "needs more change, more variety. Hayesford is all very well in its way, and your garden is charming, but they're not enough. I'm

going to Ashworth fair on Monday. Would you object if I took her with me?"

Winterborne's suspicious eyes narrowed as he looked hard at the Doctor. "Is this a plot?" he asked.

"My dear man, don't talk nonsense about plots. Of course it isn't a plot. You've consulted me as a physician—in an extremely unprofessional way, I admit—and I tell you frankly that your daughter requires more change. Most daughters, I may add, would find it without asking permission."

"If I consent," said Winterborne, "will you keep an eye on her all the time?" He appeared to be rather scared by the Doctor's direct attack.

"I promise you that," Wilder said.

"Then she shall go," Winterborne said reluctantly.

Janet, who was waiting in the garden, received the news with dancing eyes.

"I'm most awfully grateful to you, Doctor," she said. "I'm longing to see the fun."

"I'll come for you at ten o'clock on Monday morning. I can manage that. I've no serious cases at present."

\* \* \* \* \*

Wilder picked up his charming passenger at the appointed hour. Janet was radiant—she seemed almost childishly happy. Winterborne did not appear.

Wilder had some difficulty in guiding his car through the crowded and narrow streets of Ashworth, and he felt relieved when it was safely housed in the garage of the Black Bull. From that hostelry they walked to the lower part of the town, where a great open space was packed with cattle-pens. It wasn't at all the kind of thing that the Doctor had always associated with fairs. It was a turmoil of shoving and shouting humanity, of bellowing, and of dust.

"I don't see where the fun comes in," he said. "I expected to see merry-go-rounds and cocoanut shies and gingerbread stalls, and that kind of thing."

"You'll see all that at the autumn fair. This is only a business fair."

"I see. Then where does the fun come in?"

"In seeing the animals and the people, and being away from the garden. This is the world, you know, to us."

There was much prodding of beasts by the sticks and hands of buyers, which Wilder thought disgusting, though it didn't appear to offend Janet, and there was noisy and truculent bargaining, and a general sense of dusty and perspiring disorder. But the



great event of the day was the auction. The finer beasts were not sold by private treaty, but put up for auction. These animals were in pens apart from the others, and their guardians did not permit them to be prodded and worried into a dazed enmity.

The auction was to begin at noon. At half-past eleven Wilder and his companion took up positions near a barrier which shut off a clear space of ground. Into this were driven the choicer beasts. In the centre was the auctioneer's rostrum, an erection sufficiently strong to withstand the impact of any animals that might get out of hand.

"There they are," Janet said.

"Who are 'they'?"

"Mr. Whateley and Mr. Trapp." She pointed cautiously, and Wilder saw his late patients leaning across the barrier. They were separated by two or three other men, also leaning across the barrier. As though moved by a common impulse, Whateley and Trapp turned at the same moment and saw Janet, beaming, standing at the Doctor's side. Both stared hard, saluted, and resumed the support of the barrier.

"A queer pair," Wilder said. "I like Whateley, but I'm not so sure about Trapp."

Janet nodded. "That's how I feel about them," she said.

"They both," he ventured to say, though he would not have dared to say it in the garden, "seem to take a particular interest in you."

"Then perhaps it's unfortunate that I take no particular interest in them." Wilder experienced an unexpected thrill. It was extraordinary how much more intimate it was for two people to be in that public crowd and dust than in a garden. He hadn't realised how much Janet had been in his thoughts since Friday.

"It may seem cruel," he said, "but I'm delighted to hear it." She gave him a slightly questioning glance and then fixed her eyes on the rostrum. A short, plump man in jacket and breeches, with highly polished leather gaiters, crossed the open space, mounted the rostrum to a buzz that had the effect of mild applause, and the sale began.

It was a tedious business to the Doctor until he realised that every animal wanted by Whateley was also wanted by Trapp, and that if Trapp started the bidding, Whateley ran him up. Then he became interested. When others dropped out of the running, these two continued to bid against each other. The thing became so

marked that each had his backers, and cries of "Go it, Trapp!" "Good old Whateley!" sardonically delivered, urged them on. Now and then they gave a hurried glance towards Janet and the Doctor, and presently it became evident to Wilder that they were bidding not so much for the possession of the animals as for the possession of Janet. They had, in fact, lost their heads for a time. Their rivalry had become grotesque.

"I think I'd like to get back into the town now," Janet said. "I want to do some shopping." She spoke gravely, but Wilder could not be sure whether it was serious gravity. Perhaps she felt sorry for the two admirers who were bidding so extravagantly for a chance that did not exist.

In West Street, which was Ashworth's shopping thoroughfare, Janet met two or three acquaintances to whom she spoke, Wilder standing by with the male's sense of discomfort on such occasions. When she went into Ashworth's principal drapery and outfitting establishment, Wilder did not think it necessary to accompany her: his promise to Winterborne to keep an eye on her did not, he considered, include a supervision of her purchases. She did not keep him waiting long. As she came out, there emerged, from the door which led to the men's department, a young man carrying a parcel which evidently contained a straw hat. He was a smart-looking fellow, well-set-up, and floridly handsome. Janet saw him at the same moment as Wilder. She stopped abruptly and looked at Wilder—appealingly, he fancied.

"Well, what is it?" he said. "Forgotten something?" Before she could reply, the young man stood before them.

"Good afternoon, Miss Winterborne," he said. "Didn't expect to see you here. You don't seem to care for Ashworth nowadays."

"I like it on fair days, Mr. Manser. . . . Let me introduce you to Dr. Wilder."

"Glad to meet you," said Manser. "I know your name, of course. You've been attending my father, but I've always been out at the time of your visits." Wilder was taken aback: he had not been aware that old Manser had a son. There, standing face to face, were the children of the protagonists of the feud.

"I thought I'd like to have a look at this wonderful fair of yours," the Doctor said, "and I confess that, as a spectacle, I don't think much of it."

"That's because you're not country-born. I'm sure Miss Winterborne enjoys it."



"For a time—yes. But I'm tired of it now." She spoke dejectedly, as though her spirits had suddenly ebbed.

"Then we'd better get back at once," said Wilder.

Manser looked at the Doctor with raised eyebrows. "So Miss Winterborne is in your charge?" he said.

"In so far as I'm going to drive her to Hayesford, Mr. Manser." He spoke stiffly; he didn't like the tone of Manser's question.

"Then I'll say good-bye." The young man raised his hat and walked quickly away.

"Are you sure that you'd like to return at once?" Wilder asked.

"Quite sure," Janet said.

By the time the car was disengaged from the garage Wilder fancied that he saw the situation clearly. Janet and Manser were, of course, in love with each other, but the feud between the parents kept them apart. This was a disquieting and also an extremely depressing conclusion. What use was it to have Whateley and Trapp out of the running? They had never been in it.

Wilder drove very slowly, saying little, and Janet hardly spoke at all. Suddenly he realised that she was crying.

"Why can't people be friends?" she sobbed. "Why should they hate each other?" Wilder pulled up the car with a jerk in the shadow of an immense wayside sycamore. "My dear child," he said, "don't cry, please don't! This quarrel between your father and Manser will die out, and then——"

"It won't die out—not on father's side. He's crazy about it. That's why he's kept me shut up. He thinks——"

"What? You began to tell me once before what he thought."

"He thinks that I'm in love with young Mr. Manser."

"That's the kind of thing that does happen," said the Doctor, trying to speak lightly.

"But it isn't true. Father's never said a word about it to me, but I know he thinks it, and if I swore it wasn't true he wouldn't believe me." Wilder sat bolt upright, he touched the steering wheel, and his hand dropped again. His practice in Dalston had accustomed him to sudden decisions.

"Would he believe you if you could manage to make yourself fall in love with someone else?"

"He'd have to, then," Janet said. She stopped crying and looked at the Doctor. He wasn't sure—he wasn't quite sure—that there wasn't a little mischief in her eyes.

"Then try!" he said.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later Whateley and Trapp met in the bar parlour of the Blue Boar. They eyed each other cautiously, and then, after due consideration, Whateley said—

"This is pretty news about Winterborne's gel and that doctor chap. . . . Never trusted un."

"Nor me," said Trapp. "When I saw him in the garden wi' her that mornin', I guessed."

"Was that why you turned out that night against orders?" Whateley asked.

"How 'bout you? . . . The least said o' that the better, Mr. Whateley. We understand each other—allus did."

"That's true," said Whateley. "An' she a'most ruined the pair of us at Ashworth Fair."

"A saucy minx I call her," said Trapp.

"No harsh word o' that sort, *if* you please," Whateley said. "But if the Doctor chap's got a handful, I shan't pity un!"

## RHODODENDRONS.

**T**HERE are purple rhododendrons where the water meets the trees;  
 Purple banks of rhododendrons, crimson, amethyst, cerise;  
 Purple woods of rhododendrons burning fiercely in the dark,  
 As anyone will tell you who has been in Richmond Park.

But the magic potions brewing where the rhododendrons shine,  
 The chalices of colour making glad the heart like wine,  
 These strange intoxications are for those alone who mark  
 The purple groves of Bacchus hidden deep in Richmond Park.

CLAUDINE CURREY.





"The *mem-sahib*, *bwana*! She has gone to bathe in the lake! I cannot make this imbecile woman understand the danger."

# MURIEL TAKES COMMAND

By ROBERTSON CARFRAE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

"YOU can't undertake to run a rubber plantation! For a woman, it's a sheer impossibility," declared Arnold Renton.

The girl who sat at the other side of the rickety table on his verandah frowned in a puzzled fashion. "I do wish you wouldn't be so depressing. Why can't I?"

"You might run a shop in England, or a chicken farm, but rubber, no!" he contended. "You'll get fever; the child-like African native will cheat you; you'll grow thin and your complexion will be ruined in six months. Then you'll have to give it up."

He leant forward and looked at her, hopeful that his list of terrors might go home. Mike Stanning had been a sensible chap before blackwater fever had swept him off; maybe his sister would have the family cautiousness. But no! His arguments fell on ears as deaf as the old tortoise who was searching the verandah for juicy leaves.

"I think you're wrong." The roundness of Muriel Stanning's chin could not conceal the firmness of her determination. "I'm simply broke, and the place has been left to me; I must carry it on."



"There's no 'must' about it, Muriel." Renton was almost pleading. "There's nothing but a fence between your *shamba* and mine. Let me manage it for you?"

"I can't afford a manager. If I could, the thing would settle itself."

Renton scratched his chin in impotent irritation. "That's not the point at all. Listen to me. I calculate that my place takes about one-eighth of my time in supervision; yours would take another eighth. I make a thousand a year, and so did Mike. What's to hinder you from paying me that eighth? I'll keep the books and send you the accounts every three months; you pay me a hundred and twenty-five a year and stay in England. And there you are!"

He concluded his plan with a triumphant smile and mopped his brow with relief; financial problems were not his strong suit.

Muriel furrowed her brow. "There's a catch in that somewhere. If you run one plantation now, then you run two—that divides your time by half, doesn't it?"

"The only difference is that I have two sets of books to keep."

"Arnold, my boy, you're not specious enough; anyone could see through that figure juggling. No, I'll set to work and run the *shamba* on my own."

"Despite the creepy-crawlies and the loss of your complexion?" he asked, with studied indifference.

"Don't be horrid! You'll have to help me, you know."

"I will. But you'll come a most unholy mucker, young woman. However, have it your own way. At least it will be experience."

The girl grimaced at him. "Wait, my boy, only wait! In three months I shall be teaching you the refinements of the trade."

"In three months you'll be jolly nearly dead—if you're not on your way home." he bickered amiably.

Muriel Stanning rose. "Come over and see me some time, Arnold. I must go now."

"I'll be over this evening—with a couple of bandages," he said gloomily. "I expect you'll cut yourself to ribbons opening tins. I've got a good medicine chest here; help yourself at any time!"

"Thank you very much, you old ghoul!" Muriel waved cheerily as she walked along the path that led from Renton's untidy bungalow to the house on the next estate—a trim figure, extraordinarily straight and neat.

Arnold Renton shook his head and poured himself a sundowner of weak whisky and water. Outside, the setting sun glistened on the leaves of his beloved rubber trees, whose mathematically straight lines merged almost imperceptibly into those of Stanning's place. The only evidence of neglect was the fence that ran between the two plantations; it had crumbled into disuse and was barely sufficient to mark the boundary.

The girl had been in the thatched house on the neighbouring estate for three weeks, for the first two of which she had crept round like a mournful ghost, obsessed by sorrowful memories of the brother who lay buried under a great mound of stones. But lately she had become more cheerful; she was now importantly "planning my future course of action."

It worried Renton, and he grumbled to himself as he realised that this preposterous young woman had come to stay. It meant the end of all his comfortable bachelor untidiness; her neatness was by contrast a thing to shame him. The place would now be as formal as a suburb, he thought miserably; it was really very aggravating. Renton was thoroughly set in his ways.

However, if he could not continue to manage the two *shambas* as he had done since the boy's death—Renton, being almost thirty, had always regarded Mike's twenty-five years as preposterous youth—he could at least see, in a quiet way, that Muriel was not hampered. He drew towards him the ledger that held particulars of the labourers, and began to mark the efficient members with a cross.

The climate of Africa was enough handicap for a woman, he thought grumpily; he might as well see that she got decent labour. A development of this idea occurred to him, and when his houseboy Mtibu brought the lamp, he gave orders for the cook and head boy to come.

"Yes, *bwana*," said the boy obediently, his white *kanzu* flapping like wings behind his back as he shuffled off.

They appeared in a few minutes, the cook-boy carrying a partly dismembered chicken as a dumb protest against this disturbance of his duties. Mrombo, the headman, grunted aloud to attract Renton's notice.

"You know the *mem-sahib* who came from Europe?" he began. "She wishes to look after the *shamba* herself. That will be done!"



"Fool's talk!" said Mrombo bluntly.

"I am not master there," reminded Renton. "The boys will be divided, Mrombo, and I want you to go to the place with the boys we choose. You will punish laziness, see that *posho* is not stolen, and that the work is well done. Night by night you will bring me a report. If anything goes wrong, then the son-of-a-dog responsible will lock to me for punishment."

"*Bwana*," pleaded Mrombo, "it is bad, this talk. Let women do the work of women. Beat the *mem-sahib* and send her home. We will run the *shamba* as before."

"I could not beat the *mem-sahib* if I wished—which I do not," said Renton curtly. "Do not be foolish, Mrombo; these are the orders."

The headman went slowly to the verandah steps, then paused. "The *bwana* has no wives; I have four," he reminded. "Beating is good for women who know not their place. But I will obey, though it bring ruin on us." He sighed and departed, overcome by this last evidence of his master's good-natured weakness.

Mparo, the cook, had his excuses ready trembling like an avalanche of words on his lips. Before he could utter them, Renton spoke briskly.

"Now, Mparo, you will go to the *mem-sahib's* house and see that she has good food—better than that you give to me at times. Take that chicken with you; I have plenty of tinned food. You may return for anything that is lacking in her kitchen. Do not waste the *mem-sahib's* sugar and tea on the houseboys' worthless bodies. Finally, you will send her cook to me; he is a bush-pig, but he will serve."

"But, *bwana*——" Mparo twisted his wrinkled face.

"If you hurry, you will have time to cook her dinner," cut in Renton firmly.

"*Bassi, bwana!*" The cook trailed off the verandah resignedly, jerking the chicken with vicious emphasis.

"Between them," thought Renton to himself, "they will keep her from starvation. Mrombo will see that I haven't a wilderness to clear when she does go home."

With the prospect of that happy day like a mirage in his mind, Renton finished his whisky and went off to have a bath before dinner.

## II.

It was a fortnight before he saw the girl again. Then he called on her after an afternoon's shooting, bearing an offering

of fresh meat. He was bringing it, he persuaded himself, as an act of self-preservation more than anything else, for Mparo had adopted his new mistress with enthusiasm; his raids for luxuries were depleting Renton's store of tinned stuff. Half of it was already gone—a serious matter now that he had to depend on a cook who burnt everything except his shaving water.

He found Muriel on the verandah, reading. She looked the part, he thought, in her drill breeches and high boots, with a short-sleeved silk blouse. Her helmet lay near, immaculate in contrast with the battered affair which covered Renton's head.

"I've brought you some beef," he remarked. "How's the place?"

"Thank you, the rubber industry flourishes. Mike certainly knew how to pick good boys, I must say."

Renton shrugged his shoulders, thinking ruefully of the scrubby gang who loafed so happily amongst his own trees, now that the efficient Mrombo's eyes were elsewhere. And all for the benefit of this complacent little braggart! "I'm glad to hear that," he contrived to utter untruthfully.

"And my cook is a dear; you must come to dinner one night."

"I should love to!" Which was really true, for a man might just as well have a peck at his own expensive food on occasion. "Seen any snakes or horrors yet?" he asked, somewhat mollified.

"None. The houseboy keeps them away. He says the *bwana* told him to do it; poor Mike must have loathed insects, too."

"Glad the fathead didn't say which *bwana!*" thought Renton. Aloud he said: "H'm! You're pretty well bitten. If you get fever, climb into bed and pile blankets all over you. Take some aspirin and hot tea; then you'll sweat it out. That's all I ever do. D'you take quinine?"

Muriel looked down at her round white arms, now flecked with ominous red marks of mosquito bites. "No, I haven't as yet," she confessed.

"To-day's Monday in civilised places. You'd better take ten grains to-night and fifteen to-morrow. Repeat it every week." He prescribed with almost professional brevity.

"Thanks, I will! Isn't this a beautiful life?" Muriel stretched her arms wide, as if to embrace the whole landscape. "If I



had known, I would have come out long ago."

Remembering Mike Stanning's opinion of women who obstinately ruined their health in the tropics, Renton sighed. He could not possibly wreck such a charming illusion.

"By the way, I got a letter from Nairobi this week," said the girl suddenly. "I hear that you're a woman-hater, and that you were dreading my arrival. Is that true?"

"You know," he evaded, "whatever bad points Nairobi gossip may have, it's sometimes entertaining and always untrue. If you loaf, they say you're hampering the country's development. As I happen to work, I suppose they call me a lunatic or something."

"Don't dodge the question, my poor transparent soul! Is it true?"

"I could have done without you very well," he confessed modestly. "But don't let it worry you."

"It doesn't," she said severely. Looking at her chin, Renton thought that she was more like Mike than ever.

Renton became aware of an icy chill in the atmosphere; he rose and held out his hand. "When shall I come over to dinner?"

"I couldn't think of distressing you," she answered loftily.

He walked rapidly to his own dreary bungalow, which looked sadly neglected compared with the neatness he had just left, and dropped into his canvas chair; his temper was at boiling point.

"Hi, boy!" he roared. "Clear some of this mess away before I fine you two months' pay! And send the cook to me!"

Presently Mparo's substitute, who was steadily ruining his master's digestion, slouched into view; he was thin and ragged and unrepentant. His grin reminded one of a slice of melon, thought Renton, in an access of morose irritation.

"Cook me a good dinner to-night," he commanded. "I want tinned soup—tomato; open a tin of tongue, after you've cooled it; tinned pears. And I'll have some asparagus," he finished with reckless abandon.

The cook gasped and disappeared in stunned silence. Renton poured himself a tot of whisky. "Eating my grub and won't part with a bite of it! Getting along beautifully, thank you! With my own boys, while I struggle with the worst mob in Africa! Won't even ask me to dinner!

It's too much! Oh, by Jove, it's too much!"

### III.

For the next ten days he avoided the girl with studied care. From a distance he saw her; he thought that she was beginning to feel the climate, and felt an urgent desire to do something. But the insult of the dinner-party had bitten deep, and he vowed that she would pay the next call, for he would not budge a foot towards her.

This, he reflected, was what he got for paying attention to business; those gossips in Nairobi would say anything! Just because he declined to flirt with the beautiful indiscrimination that they affected. It was all their fault.

All the same, he had a jolly good mind to go over and make his peace with Muriel; she was a plucky little girl; just like Mike. Pretty, too—dashed pretty, with those steady eyes and—— He pulled himself together and crushed the thoughts into the background.

There was a lot of work to be done; the rains had come, and he had scarcely time to breathe, hampered as he was by his rag-tag labour gangs. The tinned stuff was almost finished, too; he gave the last of it to Mparo, who took it to the neighbouring kitchen and heartlessly left his master to live on what he could find.

The grim grey stretch of bush below the plantation was flooded; the river overflowed its banks at one point and made a lake almost a couple of acres broad. Life was not very pleasant; Renton found himself worrying over the safety of the girl.

He went over all the possible disasters—and they are many in the bush—and assured himself that she had warning of them all. Mrombo's reports were good, and the plantation was doing unexpectedly well. Renton ought to have been satisfied; for some vague reason he was not.

Of necessity, his conferences with Mrombo were held in the very early morning to ensure that Muriel Stanning knew nothing about them. The headman would appear while Renton was drinking his morning tea; in the cold grey dawn he received a detailed report of the previous day's affairs, and gave orders for what appeared to be necessary.

He was roused one morning by a vigorous shaking of his shoulder; when he opened his eyes he saw that Mrombo was not alone. Beside him stood the impassive figure of Muriel's Chinese maid. Renton blinked at her.



"What's the matter, Mrombo?" he demanded sleepily. "What does this woman want?"

The native's teeth were chattering in his head; Renton leapt out of bed in sudden alarm. For no definite reason his heart felt like lead within him. He seized the shivering Mrombo and shook him.

"The *mem-sahib*, *bwana*! She has gone to bathe in the lake! I cannot make this imbecile woman understand the danger—she speaks no Swahili." Mrombo's hands quivered with rage.

"But didn't you explain to the *mem-sahib* that the lake is full of crocodiles, you fool? When did she go?" He swung round and repeated the question in English.

"Ten minutes ago, sir," said the Chinese precisely. "My mistress found a bathing-dress in the house; she thought bathing would be healthful. This man"—she indicated Mrombo with a shrug of her shoulder—"seems to be troubled. I do not understand his talk."

"I tried to tell the *mem-sahib*," chattered Mrombo. "She only laughed and walked on."

"Come on, then!" Arnold Renton bundled into a raincoat and seized his rifle from the rack by the door.

The lake was a good two miles downstream; if the girl had walked slowly, she might yet be forestalled. The realisation of her probable fate, if she ventured into the water, drove Renton ahead at a tremendous pace, and Mrombo panted heavily at his heels. He knew that by leaving the path and crossing the low hill he could cut off the long sweep of the river bend, but he had never climbed it before, and he knew that the thorn-covered slope might be impassable. He determined to risk it.

Of all the dangers there were, this was the only one that he had forgotten, he reflected, as he left the path and plunged into the undergrowth. He shivered at the thought of the consequences.

The edges of the grass lacerated his naked feet; twining thorn tendrils lashed against his ankles and made him wince, but he kept on doggedly until a pain in his side made him slacken his pace.

"I'm in bad training for this job," he lamented. For an instant he was tempted to abandon his rifle to Mrombo, but he retained it. The headman was no longer a youth; presently he would be left behind. Renton glanced ahead. Another hundred yards

would see him at the top of the slope. He dropped his head and took it at a dogged sprint.

He raced across the broad brow of the hill and pulled up on the crest. Below lay the lake, broad and mirror-like, scarcely ruffled in the calmness of the dawn. Renton's eyes swept its surface; below him, and close to the edge, he saw the girl splashing happily in the shallows. The sight stung him like the thrust of a needle.

Further out, about three hundred yards from the shore, he caught sight of two black nostrils projecting from the water; in a rough semicircle he picked out a second, a third, then a fourth and a fifth. Under the water he could discern the long bodies of the crocodiles, immobile and black like the trunks of trees. He knew, though their motion was too deliberate to be noticeable, that they were drifting steadily forward, moving relentlessly towards their victim.

In a few minutes, he realised, one of the five, with a driving lunge of its powerful tail, would shoot forward like a torpedo, and the girl would be dragged downwards, helpless between the crushing jaws.

He heard her voice drift upwards towards him as he dashed recklessly down the slope. His foot slipped and he collided with a tree-trunk. Half stunned he leapt forward, landing in a heap on the low bank which confined the lake. Ten feet below the water gleamed black in the shadows; fifty yards out stood the girl, a comical figure in a bathing dress much too big. She smiled at him in a friendly way.

The ring of crocodiles was appreciably closer. Renton decided to say nothing; the mere name might well make her desperate with fear.

"Keep on splashing," he said calmly. "I want to have a shot at something in the water; work your way to the bank cautiously, but be as quick as you can."

"What do you want to shoot?" she asked.

He saw the nostrils of a crocodile dip; a slight eddy broke the surface of the water. "Don't argue—come out!" he snapped. He jerked the rifle to his shoulder; the girl had not moved, but he heard her gasp softly. She knew now, he realised.

"Splash! Make a flurry!" he shouted. "I'm coming in!" He looked round for Mrombo, but the native had not yet appeared. He dropped his rifle on an earthen ledge, slipped downwards and dropped with a plop into the lake. The girl,





"He landed in a tumbled heap. As he raised his head he heard a rushing of water."

white and wide-eyed, beat her hands loudly on the surface.

He thrust a passage towards her through the undergrowth, which clutched his legs, octopus-like in its tenacity. His feet slipped into an unexpected depression, and the clinging mud gripped him; he levered himself painfully free with the help of a low-hanging branch. At last he stood beside her, breathing heavily.

"Why the dickens did you come in here?" he asked. His eyes swept outwards. The beasts had moved inwards still further, and the projecting nostrils seemed perilously near; their escape was a matter of seconds.

He seized the girl bodily, raised her with a jerk, and began to work his way to safety. "Keep on hitting the water!" he gasped, as he strove to find firm foothold. "Make as much noise as you can!"

He got no answer. When he turned his head, he saw that her eyes were closed and her hands hung limply. He looked at the white face, cast a glance backwards at the silently approaching forms, and turned. Dreading the smashing plunge which would

herald an attack, he thrust himself forward, oblivious of the thorns which tore at his flesh, though it seemed that the whole strength of Nature conspired to trap him.

At last he felt relatively solid earth under his feet; the ledge which meant safety was but six feet off. Renton raised the limp burden of the girl, gathered his strength, and threw her bodily. The effort drove one foot into the clay; he twisted it clear and sprang to the bank. He landed in a tumbled heap. As he raised his head he heard a rushing of water. He looked down to see the reptile turn against the bank and return to deep water in a welter of foam.

Renton lay still, fascinated, as the lake died into calmness and the hissing white froth melted away.

Three of the reptiles still remained motionless; two had gone. He looked down at the girl and saw that her eyes were open.

"Was it——?"

"Crocodiles, yes!" he said. "Lucky



that Mrombo saw you coming here this morning."

"You carried me out? That was plucky of you, Arnold."

"Oh, you're not so very heavy, you know. Never mind that. Let's have a shot at one of these brutes, now we

are here." He picked up his rifle. "Now watch!"

He aimed and fired. The crack of the shot rang in the girl's ears; a great tail flickered in the air and crashed on the surface. In a wallow of spouting foam, the beast plunged round and sank.

"Got him!" said Renton with pride. "That is some sort of satisfaction."

Muriel Stanning, in her bedraggled bathing-dress, looked very small and very appealing. She glanced at him shyly. "I'm afraid I've given you a lot of trouble—I'm so sorry!"

Renton's eyes twinkled. "The



"He looked down to see the reptile turn against the bank."



trouble is that I don't know quite the best way to keep you in order. You're too reckless altogether, planting rubber and all that sort of thing. I tell you what"—he smiled at her gently—"I'm afraid I'll have to propose to you; then you must go home. You can't stay here if I worry you all the time, can you?"

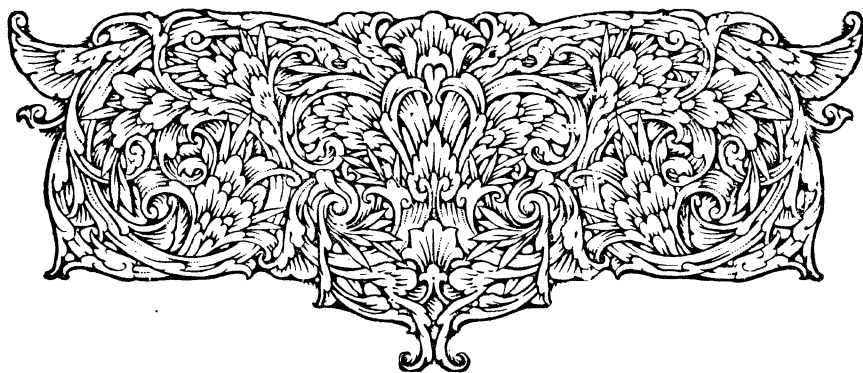
"I might say yes, you know," said the girl demurely.

"Oh!" ejaculated Renton in astonish-

ment. "That has its good points, too. It would put a spoke in the wheel of your Nairobi friend."

He made a move forward, and the girl drew back. He, clumsy as ever, only just contrived to kiss the back of a warding hand. From the top of the hill came the hoarse voice of Mrombo. They looked round.

But, after a single glance, that much-married and experienced man had discreetly turned on his tracks and gone home.



## A CHILD'S SONG OF ESSEX.

**S**ING a song of Essex!  
 Why, what is there to sing?  
 Why, fields where golden cowslips  
 Weave each returning Spring,  
 With buttercups and primroses,  
 A robe fit for a king.

Sing a song of Essex!  
 Why, what is there to sing?  
 Why, nightingales in thickets,  
 And larks upon the wing,  
 Sweet songs of praise from earth and sky,  
 As bells that ever ring.

Sing a song of Essex,  
 Of sweet desire to me!  
 As towards our Essex river  
 Beat sails from every sea,  
 So from its utmost wandering  
 Homes still my heart to thee.

DONALD SMITH.





PADDLERS AND THEIR CANOES ON THE ZAMBESI RIVER.

# THE BAROTSE AND THEIR COUNTRY IN CENTRAL AFRICA

By J. C. C. COXHEAD

THE country of the Barotse comprises a district in Northern Rhodesia of some thirty thousand square miles. The Barotse were conquered in the middle of last century by the Makololo, a tribe from the south, akin to the Bechuana. It was while they were under the Makololo domination that Livingstone visited the country in the 'fifties. Lewanika, afterwards Paramount Chief of the Barotse, was then an exile. The Makololo were not long in the country, and finally the Barotse rose and exterminated them, and there is practically no trace of them in Barotse Land at the present time. Livingstone took a number of

Makololo with him on his journey to Lake Nyasa. They were faithful servants to him, and there are many of their descendants to-day living on the Shire River near Chiromo. It is an extraordinary thing that during the short time they were in the country the Makololo succeeded in imposing their language on the conquered people, and Sekololo is now the language of the Barotse, and Serozi, their ancient language, is hardly known except by the very old men.

Through the Barotse country runs the great Zambezi River. During two months in the year a large portion of the country



(some one thousand five hundred square miles) becomes completely flooded. Consequently much of the travelling has to be done by boat. The European travels in a barge or native canoe propelled by ten to fifteen paddlers. At night he sleeps on land in a tent. Duck and geese are to be shot in many places, and there is usually good fishing to be had. The tiger fish, of the salmon tribe, offers excellent sport. He can be caught with a large spoon either by trolling or casting. He runs up to about twelve pounds in weight. In certain places

Chief moves from his capital Lialui—which becomes partially inundated—to the Mafulo or flood camp, where he resides until the flood has subsided. The *Nalikwanda*, so called from the name of the huge state barge, is the annual pageant, when hundreds of barges and canoes go in procession from Lialui to the flood camp.

The ancient custom of "throwing a man to the crocodiles" is still kept up. During the procession the chief marks down one of the paddlers, usually an important Induna, and probably a favourite of the chief, and



THE "NALIKWANDA," THE STATE BARGE OF THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF.

there is bigger game to be had, some of the larger antelope, such as kudu, water-buck, and lechwe. Giraffe and elephants are to be found on the western side.

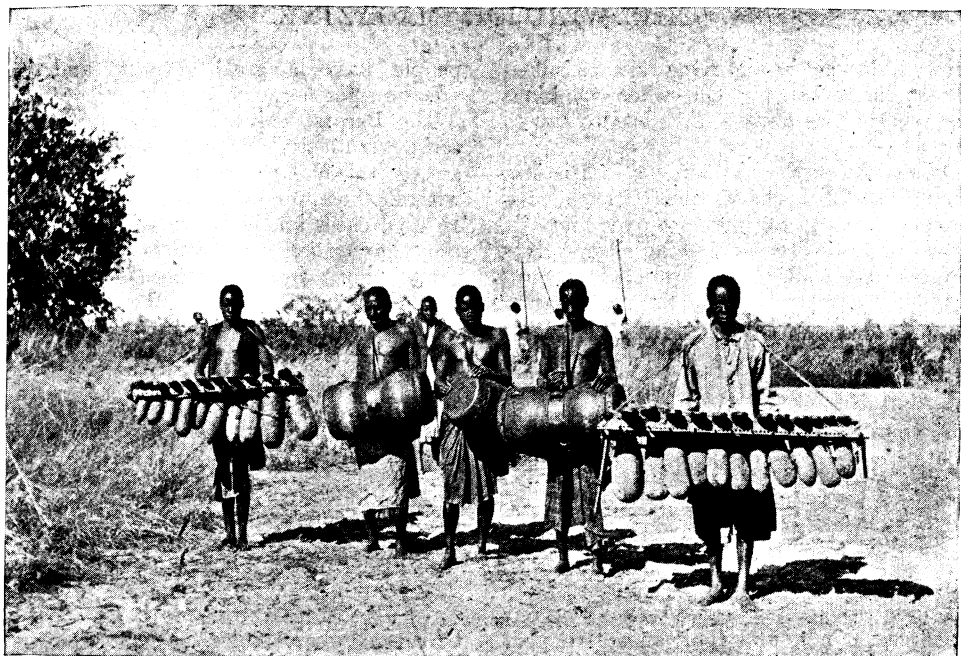
The Barotse are expert boatmen and marvels of strength and endurance. They will paddle for eleven hours a day with only a rest of half an hour in the middle of the day. The journey from Katomboro, near Livingstone, to Lialui takes about twenty days going up stream and about twelve days down stream.

It is during the flood that the Paramount

says: "Seize that man—he's not working—and throw him to the crocodiles!" He is immediately seized and thrown overboard.

The barge with the chief's wives coming on behind picks him up. Of course there are no crocodiles nowadays, as this procession takes place only in the very narrow canal. In the old days it used to take place on the Zambesi River, and if the person thrown overboard was one whom the chief particularly disliked, he was not picked up. Now it is considered an honour to be the person chosen.





THE PARAMOUNT CHIEF'S BAND.

The late Paramount Chief Lewanika, who died in 1916, was a man of great character, and he and Khama of the Bechuana stand out as really great men of the African world. He came to Europe at King Edward's Coronation, and was received by His

Majesty at Buckingham Palace. King Edward was dressed in a Field-Marshal's uniform. Lewanika was so impressed that on arrival in the Royal presence he lay flat on his face and could hardly be persuaded to rise. However, when he was asked



PADDLERS TAKING PART IN A REGATTA ON THE FLOODED PLAIN.



afterwards what he and King Edward talked about, he replied: "Oh, when we kings get together we always have lots to say to one another."

Lewanika never became a Christian, though Coillard, the famous French missionary, had a great influence over him. It would have involved divorcing all his wives except one, and this Lewanika was unwilling to do. A new book regarding Coillard has recently been published. It was largely due to Coillard's influence that Lewanika became the well-mannered gentleman he was. He was greatly interested in the progress of the world and in English politics. The writer was asked whether he was a Liberal or a Conservative. He replied that to a certain extent he was a Conservative, upon which Lewanika said with a smile: "And so am I."

On the outbreak of war Lewanika made a present to the British Government of four hundred pounds, and took an active part in recruiting men as carriers and soldiers.

Twenty miles below Lialui, the town of the Paramount Chief, is Nalolo, where lives the Mokwai, the sister of the late Paramount Chief Lewanika, a hale old lady of about eighty-five. The Mokwai was devotedly attached to her brother, and to this day if his name is mentioned her eyes fill with tears.

Visitors to the Mokwai camp on the other side of the river to Nalolo at the Government station. To the more important visitors a present of an ox is sent.

The Mckwai is enormously stout, and her method of progression on land is in a huge native canoe which is drawn over the sand by a team of oxen. She recently paid a visit to Livingstone, the capital of Northern Rhodesia, as she particularly wanted to see a train and travel in one. Accordingly she was given a trip to the Victoria Falls, about seven miles away, a truck having been specially fitted up with chairs and rugs.

The missionaries have exercised a considerable influence over her, and her

people have a great respect, and even affection, for her.

The Barotse enjoy a certain measure of self-government. Their Paramount Chief is a constitutional monarch, and decides little without the approval of his National Council. In civil cases and in minor criminal cases they have their own courts with limited jurisdiction. Only the more serious cases are tried by the Resident Magistrate or his assistants. He rules more by tact and personal influence than by direct executive control.

The system works well up to a certain point, but there is always likely to be bribery and corruption, and very often the lower orders are punished while the Indunas and upper classes get off scot-free.

Some of the punishments meted out to criminals and those who annoyed the chief in the old days were very terrible. Sometimes they were thrown into the river to be eaten by crocodiles. One of the worst tortures was to be half buried in a red ant hill and smeared with honey.

There is a very marked division between the upper and the lower classes. The upper



SIOMA FALLS,



class consists of Indunas and their relations. The lower classes comprise the "common people," most of whom are or were slaves. Nominally, slavery does not exist, and anyone can be free, but in practice there is still a certain amount of domestic slavery, although every native knows that under the British rule he can be free if he likes. Some are loath to be freed, except in accordance with their own native customs. A slave could generally be freed by payment, but if he could not be freed in this way, he would be unwilling to be freed merely because the



TRAVEL BY CANOE OVER THE FLOODED PLAIN.

British Government has said that there is no such thing as slavery.

Ten per cent. of the native tax in North-Western Rhodesia goes to what is called the



ZAMBESI RIVER.





THE MORWAI OF NALOLO, SISTER OF THE LATE  
PARAMOUNT CHIEF LEWANIKA.

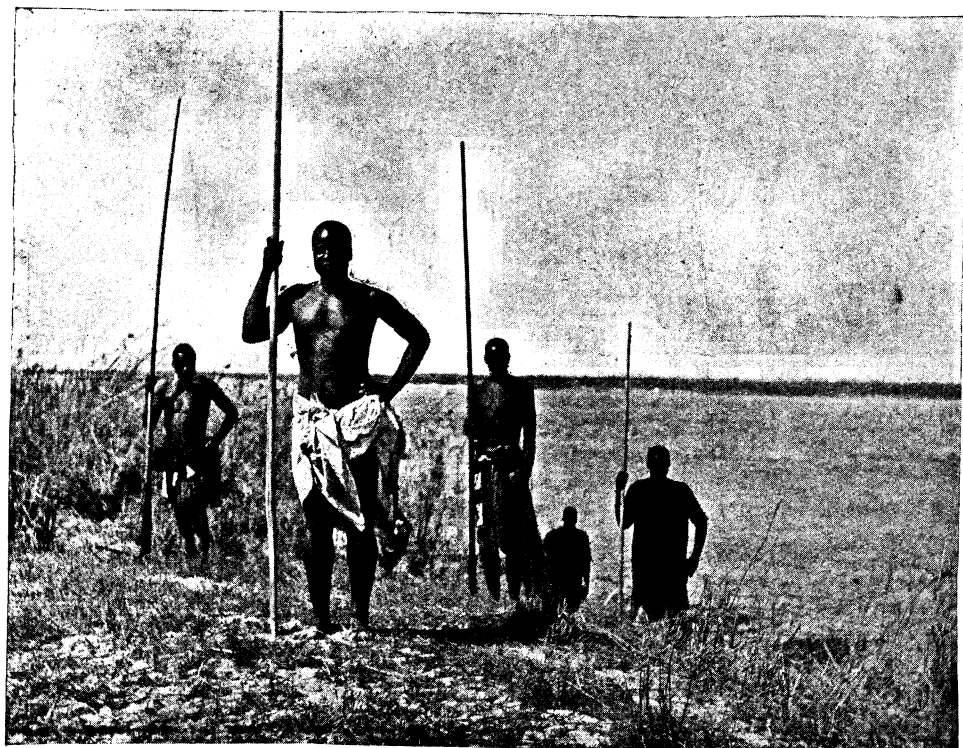
Barotse Trust Fund. Out of this is supported the Barotse National School, under Government control, where some two hundred and fifty Barotse boys (boarders) are being educated.

The boys are taught reading and writing and arithmetic. A good deal of time is devoted to industrial training, such as carpentry, blacksmith's work, and agriculture. The tone of the school is good, and, as a rule, a native is a better man for having been there, where he learns, among other things, politeness, obedience, cleanliness, and self-respect.

The principal of the school is a minister of the Church of England. The Paramount Chief distributes the prizes at the annual prize-giving. He is very anxious for a girls' school to be started, but funds are not yet available.

The Barotse Trust Fund, however, is available for other things, if necessary. It could be spent on such things as the making of canals, medical or veterinary work, anything, in fact, which may be considered to be for the good of the Barotse people in general.

The Barotse people are more fortunate



PADDLERS.



than most native tribes in Central Africa. They are rich in cattle, but unfortunately at present, owing to the prevalence of pleuro-pneumonia, there is little or no market for their cattle.

The Barotse are fond of clothes and adornment, and the local stores do a roaring trade in coloured cloth. The men wear a sort of kilt. The women wear pleated skirts like crinolines. The men affect hats a good deal, but are not much addicted to trousers, and the average Barotse of the better class is a picturesque figure as he walks along with swinging gait in his kilt and short coat and felt hat. The lower classes, as a rule, are naked to the waist, and merely wear a kilt or piece of coloured cloth.

The Barotse are fairly advanced in the matter of industries. Their basket work is exceptionally good. A great deal is made for European consumption. Their mats are good, and some of them are expert carvers

in ivory and wood. One native, the son of an Induna, a boy of about eighteen, makes remarkably good models of animals, especially the hippopotamus and rhinoceros, in clay.

Take them all round, the Barotse are more civilised than the majority of tribes in Central Africa, though not so advanced in the matter of arts and crafts as some of the Congo tribes.

They have privileges which they guard most jealously. The country is a Native Reserve—that is to say, no land can be alienated to Europeans. Store sites and such-like are leased to Europeans, and the Paramount Chief makes considerable revenue from the rents. The number of cattle in the country, according to a rough estimate, is considerably over one hundred thousand. Until, however, pleuro-pneumonia can be eradicated, and this will take many years, the Barotse can never really be prosperous, as their wealth is all locked up.



ON THE ZAMBESI RIVER.



# "HIT OUT AND GALLOP!"

By EDWARD WOODWARD

ILLUSTRATED BY GILBERT HOLIDAY

POLO enthusiasts were wont to say that "Sphinx" Ward's play as No. 2 for the Leopards was in itself a comprehensive exhibition of the game of games. But that was before the grisly spill, two fences from home in the Grand Military at Sandown Park, had robbed him of his nerve, balance and thrust; after that they shrugged fatalistic shoulders and opined he had played his last chukker.

He was definitely of the same opinion as, sleek-headed, impassive, and monocled, back in England after twelve months' convalescent voyaging, he watched the crowd at Mrs. Grice Mildmay's reception with the puckered eyes of uncertain vision.

That twelve months had bronzed his cheeks; twelve months' rigid self-discipline had braced to some extent the nerves which had been shattered by that ghastly toss. There had been serious concussion, a broken leg, collar-bone and arm. The fractures were now mended, but the injury to his head had left a tragic legacy—his eyes were like dim and shrouded lights.

To Lucas Ward—"Sphinx" only to his pals, by reason of his impeccable reserve—hunting man, steeplechaser, and polo player, the loss of rapid and accurate vision was as death. He had been blind for a fortnight after the fall, and although after that his sight had returned, it was misty and uncertain. Subsequent pain had sent him to an eye-man in Santiago; he had come away alarmed and downcast, and on his return to London, two days ago, he had visited the blunt but God-gifted oculist Seymour-Chater.

He had left the specialist's chambers as a man under sentence of death leaves the dock. Everything save life itself had been swept away from him. No longer would his stud of Irish-bred hunters be of use to him; never again would he pilot one or other of

his string of jumpers to victory between the flags. His polo ponies, schooled from "stick and ball" to "leg learning" by himself, would grow gross in their boxes, or find other owners through the conduit of Tattersall's sale-ring; and, worst of all, he would have to free Vivian Harries from her promise to be his wife.

Realising the inability of his fading eyes to pick out Vivian Harries from the gay crush, he turned and strolled towards the conservatory, and then abruptly, as he entered the coolth of the dim interior, he came face to face with the girl.

"Hallo, Sphinx!" There was joy in Vivian's tone, and a thrill passed through Lucas Ward's being. But ruthlessly he steadied himself; there was stern work ahead. "I've just turned up," went on Vivian. "Heard you'd arrived, and was coming to look for you. Let's sit down. I've been at Epsom all day. How are you, old boy? Odd of you not to let me know you had returned from your wanderings."

"Sorry, Vivian," smiled Lucas, laying his hand on her cool arm, "but—well, I have something rather important to tell you. Let's squat here."

The note of restraint in his voice, the rigid self-control of his manner, brought sudden surprise and apprehension to the girl's eyes. She was very lovely. The flame of her gown was handmaiden to her dark beauty; her vivid lips ivoryed the natural pallor of her wonderful skin; her black-fringed grey eyes were sombre as they regarded the man she loved.

"Has anything horrible happened, Sphinx, dear?" she asked, seating herself in a deep basket-chair. "Do you know you haven't written to me since you were in Chili three months ago?"

The smile had faded from Lucas's face,



and just for a second he hesitated. Then, speaking, his voice was grave.

"Yes, Vivian. It was in Chili that a medico hinted catastrophe to my hopes in life. Since arriving in England that hint has been made a plain-worded fact."

Alarm, sudden and enervating, came to Vivian. "Sphinx," she whispered, "what is it?"

Almost brutally, in his agony, Lucas answered: "That in six months I shall be blind!"

Horror-stricken, with a gasp as of physical pain, Vivian gripped his arm.

But with a hard ring in his voice Lucas went on: "Old Seymoor-Chater, the eye-man, gave me my *congé* yesterday. Apparently, owing to that fall on my head, my optic nerves are atrophying. I can't see more than five yards ahead of me as it is; sudden excitement, I am told, will rob me of that power. I'm not to hunt, not to play polo, not to fatigue myself, or else my six months of light will be cut short."

He paused, a grim smile on his lips, and Vivian, a sense of terrible awe in face of this tragedy assailing her, bent close to him.

"Sphinx," she whispered, "Sphinx, oh, what can I say? What can I do to tell you how sorry I am?"

"Nothing."

That one word had all the sad finality of the world in it. Dumb with grief, Vivian bowed her head to hide the starting tears.

From the reception room the strains of Mollier's string band playing "Ma Mère l'Oie" came to their ears like a jeer. Only too clearly did Vivian know now why Lucas had abruptly ceased to write to her; only too lucidly was the restraint of his manner explained. He was going to offer her her freedom, and, with a fierce and strengthening passion, she knew she would never accept it. Even as the thought came to her mind, Lucas spoke.

"I want you to consider yourself free, Vivian." There was a note of cold-blooded self-sacrifice in his voice which chilled Vivian's heart.

"Don't, don't, don't!" she gasped. "How can you think I'd be such a coward? Without sight, without health, you are still the man I love! I don't want my freedom, Sphinx! I want you!"

"A living corpse, Vivian?" cut in Lucas. "A bally death's-head at any feast, whose wife in six months from now would become

an unpaid sick-nurse, doomed for life to lead a blind man around by the hand, feed him, and tolerate his irritability when she wanted to kick him."

With an effort Vivian pulled herself together. "Sphinx," she said, her voice low and vibrant, "it's not like you to be bitter and cynical. If a woman loves a man. . . ."

Feeling her breath on his cheek, Lucas knew she had got beneath his guard, and steeled himself to go through with the task he had set himself. Of course Vivian recoiled against the suggestion of desertion—the mere thought was obnoxious to her—but he must play the stronger part, and save her against her wish, though the doing of it shattered his heart to splinters.

"Don't, Vivian!" he said, his voice harsh and unsteady. "Don't tempt me into doing something for which I should hate myself! You know I love you, always have, and always shall. It's because of that love that I refuse to let you sacrifice yourself for me. I'm going down to Lelland to-morrow to have a look at the old place whilst I am able to see it tolerably well. I shall remain there until my eyes gutter out. Forget me!"

Very slowly Vivian rose to her feet. She knew Lucas Ward too well to imagine for one instant that any words of hers would make him do that which his austere creed told him was dishonourable, but in sacrificing himself he was crucifying her happiness, and a sudden vivid anger against her lover for believing her capable of such base desertion filled her brain and swept pity from her heart.

With tears in her eyes and indignation in her voice she stood before Lucas. "Forget you!" she said. "I shall never forget you. I loved you with all my heart and soul. When you had that accident I thought I should die; but if you believe my love so shallow, if you believe me afraid of misfortune, I can only hate you!"

Turning, she left Lucas standing, and for a second black tragedy was sketched on his face. Then the old smile came to his lips.

"Jupiter!" he thought. "If only I could deaden my conscience and accept Vivian's sacrifice, it would be a full compensation for all my other losses!" Abruptly his brain swung to the old polo axiom "Hit out and gallop!" "Good for most things in life," he soliloquised, "but not when failure to win through means



misery to the most wonderful girl in the world."

## II.

LELLAND COURT was a wonderful old place. It had come to Lucas from his father in the natural order of things, and, being mellow with the traditions of the Ward family, Lucas knew that if any environment could help to assuage the blow Fate had dealt

of whom had flatteringly complimented him on the occasion of his first trousers, received him with open arms; but when the news of their young master's coming affliction became known, grief and horror filled their hearts. Of their wisdom they contrived to keep cheery, smiling faces in his presence, but in the privacy of their own quarters they gave rein to their sorrow,



"Lucas went thudding to the ground as the ball flew between the posts."

him, it was the broad terraces, velvety lawns, dignified rooms of the house, spacious stables, and orderly white-railed stud farm, which had always symbolised home and sympathy to him. He therefore travelled down to this sanctuary the day after his abdication of Vivian.

Joe Meredith, the stud groom who had taught Lucas to straddle his first tub-sided pony, Watts, the butler, and old Mrs. Rawton, the motherly housekeeper, both

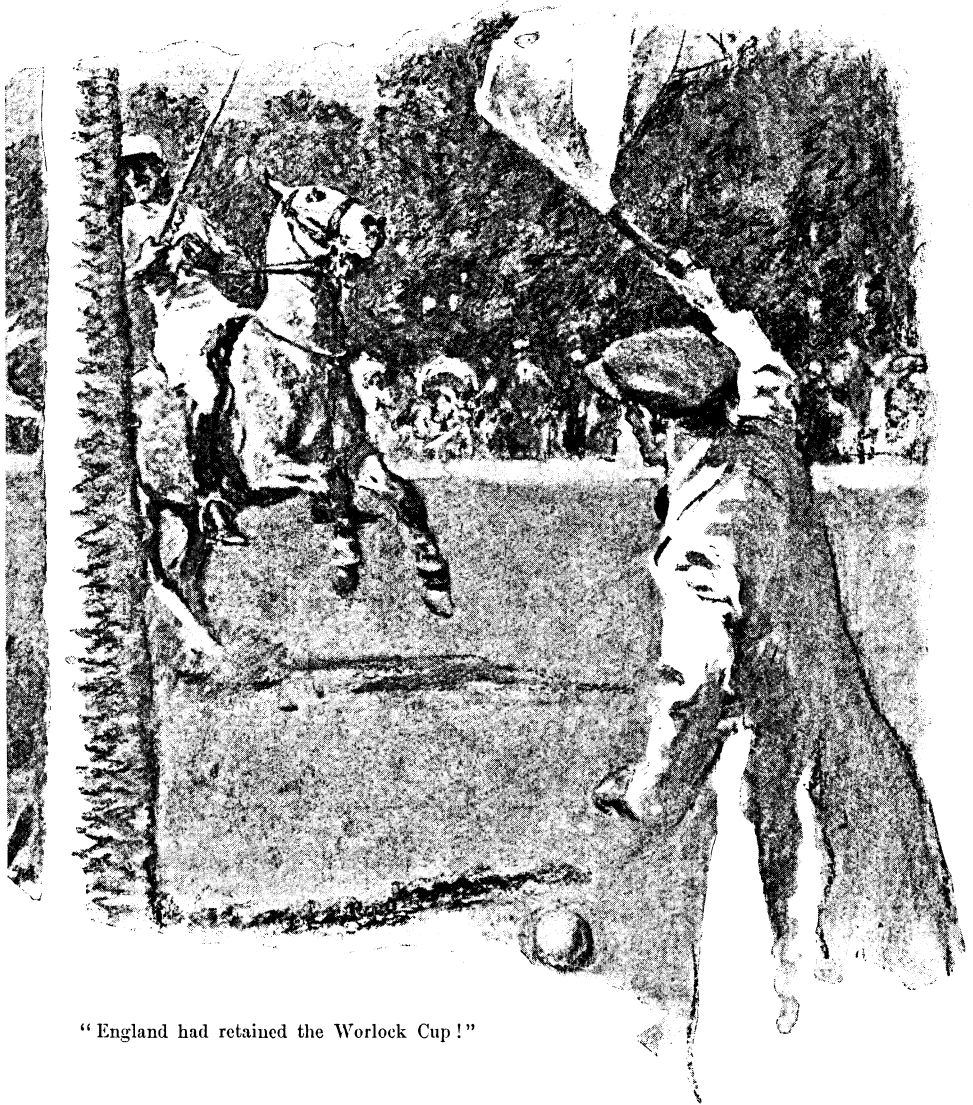
and prayed to their God that some miracle might happen to avert the horror of lifelong darkness from the man they loved as a son.

Methodically Lucas set to work to prepare for the coming eclipse. Each morning saw him astride one or other of his horses, hungrily snatching all the pleasure he could whilst yet light remained to him. Diligently he schooled himself to identify each occupant of his stables by touch; each day he



practised finding his way about some portion of the house or estate without the use of his fading eyes; and if the doing of it was an ever-present hell to him, it was fiendish torture to the old servants to watch the man who had always been so agile and

which shattered his Spartan composure. The secretary of the Polo Association notified him of a practice match to be held at the County Club the following week, with a view to selecting the team to defend the Worlock Cup against the Argentine in three



"England had retained the Worlock Cup!"

alert wander hesitatingly forward with hands outstretched in an attitude of dumb supplication.

During this time no word came from Vivian, and, although his heart was on the rack, Lucas told himself almost savagely it was what he wished.

And then one morning, three weeks after he had come home, Lucas received a note

weeks' time. He invited Lucas to play No. 2 for the "Red" side.

Apparently news of Lucas Ward's affliction had not reached the writer's ears, and pungently it was borne in upon "Sphinx" that, like the origin of his nickname, he was just a "looker-on."

"And I'll not be even that much longer," he mused, ticking off another day on his



wall calendar. "I'll just be an armchair critic, basing my opinions on newspaper reports read to me by those who have the gift of sight."

For a day he wrestled with black despondency, and then came to a decision.

"If I can't play, I'll see what I can of the game," he told himself. "If what Chater says is true, I'll be too far gone in the mists to see anything by next season, so I'll risk meeting Vivian again, and watch the practice match and the game for the Cup. But oh, Heaven, if only I could 'Hit out and gallop' once more!"

And although his heart was lead, he on the day of the practice match greeted the gay crowd at the club with his old nonchalant smile, received their sympathy with persiflage, and only when Bob Major, of the "Whites," came up and commiserated with him for being "out of it," and when, strolling down behind the line of watchers, he saw Vivian chatting to Terry Musgrave, who had taken his place as No. 2 for the "Reds," did realisation of the fulness of his loss wipe the mask of smiling defiance from his face.

Bitterly he recalled Vivian's last words to him: "If you believe me afraid of misfortune, I can only hate you!" "Ye gods," thought Lucas, "did she mean that? Well, perhaps it was as well if she did. Terry was a good chap, and had always been sweet on Vivian. But oh, hell!"

But at length, when the game started, when his filmed eyes saw the skimming white-clad figures, blurred and indistinct, but moving in the way Lucas knew and loved; when to his nostrils came the faint scent of galloped turf, and to his ears the sharp scudding of scampering ponies, a seraphic melody punctuated only by the sharp click of a deft-swung stick meeting the willow-root well and truly, the "man who had been" forgot for a space his personal grief, and found blessed distraction in the aura of the game.

It was after the seventh period, when, avoiding the tea-room, Lucas was strolling amongst the ponies, that Terry Musgrave came up to him.

"Hullo, Sphinx!" he called. "How are the eyes? Frightfully sorry to hear about them from Vivian; but if I were you I'd not take old Chater's dictum too seriously. Darned old alarmists, that's what these specialist spiders are."

Lucas smiled. "If I can see your face in six months' time, you shall come and help

me to kick him for a liar, Terry," he said. "By the way, you played a darned good game this afternoon."

"Oh, I'm not quite on my form," deprecated Terry. "But the committee have chosen me as Number Two for the Cup match."

"Stout fellow," said Lucas, keeping envy from his voice by a supreme effort of will. "I think you ought to retain the Cup, unless the Argentine ponies prove a bit too nippy for ours."

"That's it," agreed Terry. "I'd back myself to play any Argentine chap to a standstill if I had the pick of *your* ponies. Mine aren't schooled like yours."

Just for a second Lucas hesitated. This fellow Musgrave had, and was going to win, all he himself had lost. He had his sight, he had the glory of playing in the international match, and, from the look of things, he was going to win Vivian. Now he was obviously angling for the loan of his ponies.

The irony of the position struck Lucas, bringing a smile to his lips. "Well," he said, "if it's going to help us hold the Cup, you can have six of my best—Licker, White Knight, Bouncer, Gin Sling, Sheik, and the Sahib. They're all as clever as paint and can almost play the game on their own."

Joy snapped into Musgrave's face. "By Jingo, do you mean that?" he exclaimed.

Lucas laughed. "Of course," he said gaily, "I shall never play again, but it's no reason why they, too, should go into retirement."

"Will you sell 'em?" asked Musgrave eagerly.

Lucas shook his head. "No, Musgrave," he said. "They form a bit of a link for me between things as 'they is' and things as 'they was.' But I'll send them along to you the day after to-morrow, when I get home, and if you ride 'em once or twice you'll know them perfectly by the date of the Argentine match."

"By Jupiter, you're a loyalist!" exclaimed Musgrave again. "I"—he hesitated, and then continued a little shamefacedly—"I say, Sphinx, you mustn't mind my asking you, but is it true that you and Viv Harries have split? Because, if so, I—I——"

"Quite true," cut in Lucas. "Cheerio, Musgrave!" And not trusting himself to hear more, he forced a smile to his lips and strolled away with utter blank desolation in his heart.



### III.

YOUR efficiently educated polo pony is a thing of beauty almost beyond words, for he speaks of animal intelligence and the limitless patience of man. He must possess the collected balance and courage of a prize-fighter combined with the fleetness of a racehorse. He must know in the heat of the game when "leg" means stop, start, passage, change legs, bend or turn, and there must be no hesitation.

Lucas Ward's ponies knew all this, for twelve months' careful training had gone to the making of each. Lucas loved them, and when two days after the practice game he sent the six best over to Willington Heath, Terry Musgrave's place, he was both proud and pleased that he would be connected, even vicariously, with the match against the Argentine team.

But after they had gone he passed through a pretty black period of depression. Although he did not admit it to himself, he was desperately jealous of Musgrave, not only because Terry was going to play in the position which, had it not been for that dashed accident, he would have filled, but because Musgrave's words had made it obvious to him that he intended taking his place with Vivian also, if she would allow him.

And so the weeks went by, every day reminding him in some barbed way of things he must soon relinquish, and when eventually, on the day of the Test Match, he reached the County Club polo ground, greeted inquiring and superficially sympathetic friends, and settled down in a shady spot not far from the pony lines, to watch the match so far as his eyes would permit him, he would gladly have given the rest of his life for one glorious hour of clear vision, one glorious period of play.

He knew Vivian was present; he had seen her, soon after arriving, chatting to Musgrave, and, seeing her vivid face and excitement-sparkled eyes, he had been almost ready to curse the man who had so completely usurped his place in the sun of Fortune's smiles.

With screwed-up eyes he watched the teams take the field. The Argentine team, mounted on their well-bred but over-mettled ponies, looked a useful lot; but the British team, with the Hon. Jimmy Lake as No. 1, Terry Musgrave No. 2, Ronny Willard No. 3, and Claud Jagers, back, looked their match as, with the sun gleaming on their white kit and perfectly-groomed,

well-mannered ponies, they took up their station.

As the ball was sent into play, Lucas leaned forward, saw Musgrave get it; saw Jimmy Lake ride the Argentine No. 2 off; heard the sharp click as Musgrave passed over to Willard, and then his eyes ceased to focus, and with bent head he tried to follow the game with his ears.

Never so long as he lives will he forget the lincination to his soul of that first chukker. It was as though he were watching it through a film of his heart's blood. Every muscle of his body, every fibre of his soul yearned to be playing, as, with screwed-up, difficult vision, he watched the British team out-played.

Riding Gin Sling, Musgrave was evidently suffering from nerves and a little swelled head. He missed his hits, muffed passes from Jagers, and the pony Lake was riding showed no love of "going in" against the Argentines. Jagers, too, appeared to lack resolution, and twice during that period the challengers sent the ball between the posts.

The second period was little better, and at the second change of ponies the visitors were three goals to the good. Lucas, vexed with the poor show the British were making, rose from his seat and strolled down towards the waiting line of ponies to have a word with Musgrave if he got the chance.

It was just as he reached them that the catastrophe happened. Against the edicts of custom, Musgrave was wearing a pair of sharp training spurs, and, being upset by the trend of the game, he, after mounting Bouncer, used them a little heavily. Bouncer, always a sharp-tempered animal, was unused to such treatment, and showed his disapproval by bucking his rider over his head.

People looking on laughed and then went grave, for Terry scrambled to his feet, cursing lustily and clutching his right shoulder with his left hand.

"Collar-bone gone!" he gasped, his face white and drawn with the pain all horsemen who thrust and take risks know to their cost.

Jagers, alarm on his face, rode up and, hearing Terry's words, added his curses to those of the injured man.

"What the blazes are we to do now?" he growled. "There's not a man on the ground capable of playing Number Two, and we can't afford to shuffle round and put a novice up as Number One, to do nothing but 'ride off.'"



With a suddenly beating heart, Lucas made his way to Jagggers. "Will you give me a chance, Jagggers?" he asked.

Jagggers looked round abruptly. "But what about your eyes, old son?" he asked. "Isn't there a chance of them giving out under strain?"

"They'll hold until we've won the match," laughed Lucas. "I'll take my chance, at any rate. Musgrave's kit will fit me, and although I can only see about five yards ahead, my ponies will take me to the ball every time, and once there I can hit out and gallop with the best."

Just for a second Jagggers hesitated. "But what if you get thrown on your napper, Sphinx?" he asked.

"The light will go out a bit before it's time; but I'm fed up with twilight. Is it a bet?"

"By Jove, it's an honour to know you, Sphinx!" murmured Jagggers. "These Argentine beggars are the very devil."

Lucas waited no longer, but hurried off to the dressing-room, and in two minutes had flung aside the shameful garments of looker-on, and was climbing into the kit which Musgrave had been helped out of.

In something under ten minutes he was astride White Knight, thrilled once more by feeling the elastic gait of the perfect polo pony.

As with the other three members of the team he rode on to the ground, a Gatling fire of handclapping greeted him, and Vivian Harries, knowing perhaps more pungently than the others what he was risking, felt the blood in her veins tingle with admiration, and vivid love swept away the feeling of injury which Lucas's refusal of her offered sacrifice had occasioned.

In a trance of delight Lucas took up his position in the centre of the field, saw the ball come into play, and then "Crack!" and with an instinctive pressure of his near-side leg he swung White Knight round and, without a moment's pause, flew scudding after the willow-root.

Jimmy Lake cut off at right angles and pushed his pony into a forward-galloping Argentine, and arriving alongside the Argentine back as he stooped for a back-hander, Lucas passaged at the gallop, and, bending forward, hit across from under his pony's chin to where he guessed Ronny Willard was waiting. Then, swinging right, he raced off down the field, saw dimly that Willard had beaten the opposing back, saw the Argentine No. 1 scudding down the wing

to "ride off," thanked his stars the "off-side" rule was a thing of the past, and, hearing the click of Willard's stick on the ball, swooped forward to gather it in and shoot.

Ahead he saw the green-flagged, black-and-white banded posts, and prayed for the miracle of a half-blind man shooting a ball between those posts whilst travelling at thirty miles an hour. Seeing the ball scudding towards him, he swung himself forward, his stick back, and, with a supplication for success on his lips, struck.

He saw the ball streak out of his limited vision, galloped forward, and then his heart leapt with joy, for the applause round the ground told him he had scored the first goal for the British side.

Vivian's heart sang with glee as she heard that ripple of applause. How splendid Sphinx was! She longed to go to him at the end of the chukker, but her pride held her back. He had rejected her offer of love and sacrifice. He placed his creed of behaviour above her love, and all through the fourth and fifth periods, during which, as a man possessed, Lucas beat down the Argentine defence and equalised the score, she sat thrilled at the courage of the man who, with blindness hanging over him, was playing so thrusting and danger-ignoring a game, but raging against the inhibition in his make-up which kept him from accepting her love.

The sixth chukker was a blank, and for the seventh and last Lucas selected his favourite pony, Gin Sling, which he knew used his head like a human. Already his twelve-months-rested riding muscles were stiff and sore, his eyes saw a double outline, and behind them a stabbing, throbbing pain was nearly driving him mad.

His play would, he knew, have to be largely by instinct, and as the ball came into play, he swooped forward through the opposing Nos. 2 and 3, swerved to the left as the Argentine back galloped at him, and, glimpsing for just a second the goal, struck as the other brought his stick down.

Lucas's effort was just a fraction too late, and the white ball flew back towards the British goal. Wheeling round, Lucas set off in pursuit. Inch by inch, yard by yard, he overhauled the opposing forward, smashed alongside, swung back, and, putting every ounce of his remaining strength into a back-hander, sent the ball across to Willard.

Like a swallow on the wing, Gin Sling



came round to the drawn-back leg, and set off down the field.

A blur of white and bay flashed into Lucas's vision as the Argentine No. 3 came at a sharp angle to ride him off; but Lucas, filled with the god of thrust, was a shade too quick, and, like a mass of springs, Gin Sling checked, passaged, and came up on the back's stick-side as the Argentine overrode the ball.

The next instant Lucas had reached out and shot for goal as the Argentine No. 3 rode into him to baffle his stroke. Gin Sling skidded from the impact, and,

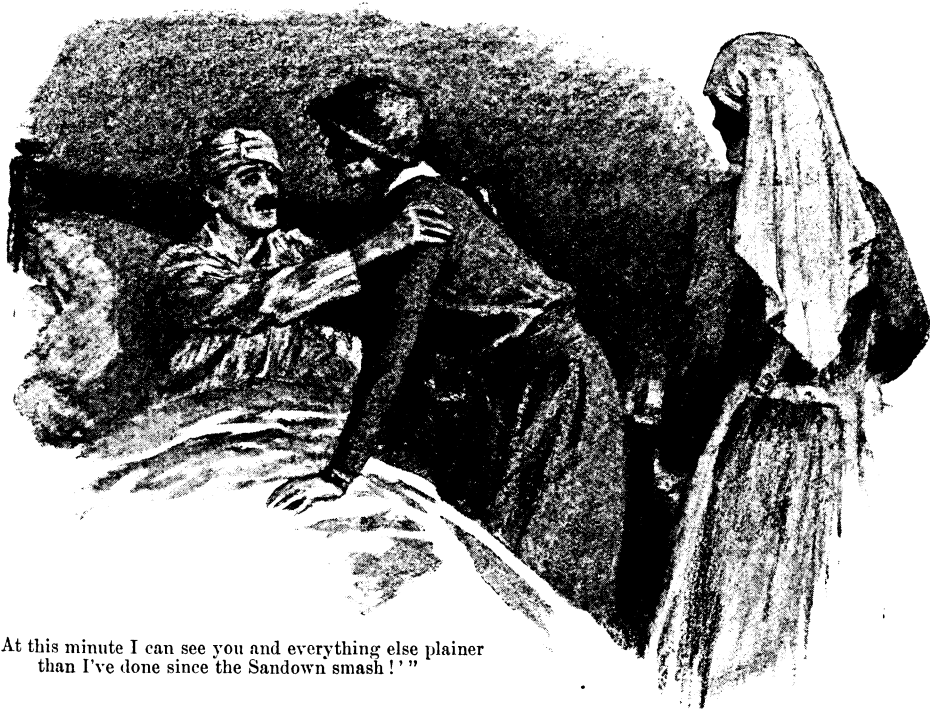
glimpsing Lucas lying in that piteous crumpled heap, forgot all sense of pique and affront, forgot pride, forgot convention, and, springing to her feet, ran across the ground.

Jaggers and Lake were lifting him up when she reached the spot, and with a half sob, half moan, flinging reserve to the winds, Vivian bent over the man she loved and pressed her lips to his.

"Sphinx!" she whispered. "Oh, Sphinx!"

\* \* \* \* \*

It was three hours later that Lucas Ward regained consciousness. He was in



"At this minute I can see you and everything else plainer than I've done since the Sandown smash!"

exhausted, off his balance, and with his knee-grip gone to blazes, Lucas went thudding to the ground as the ball flew between the posts. England had retained the Worlock Cup!

For a second, in the joy of the victory, the artillery of applause rattled round the ground, and then abruptly stilled, as it was seen that the man who had scored that winning goal lay limp where he had fallen.

Even whilst the onlookers held their breath, apprehensive of what had happened, and whilst the members of either team forgot jubilation and disappointment in concern for the injured man, Vivian Harries,

the Marlborough Nursing Home, his head swathed in cold bandages, and the room dimmed by drawn curtains.

As consciousness returned, his eyelids flickered, and the two women watching him held their breath. Then gradually, tentatively, his eyes opened. For a space he looked into the faces of Vivian and the nurse, the skin round his eyes wrinkled. Uncertainty lay in his expression, then abruptly startled surprise took its place.

Before either watcher could check him, he sat up, flung out his arms and laughed, laughed wildly like a man in delirium. Tears started from his eyes and rolled down



his cheeks, and Vivian, alarmed, bent towards him.

"Sphinx," she breathed, "what is it? Why are you laughing?"

Impulsively Lucas gripped Vivian's shoulders. "Because I'm not blind!" he exclaimed. "Because at this minute I can see you and everything else plainer than I've done since the Sandown smash!" He paused, laughing again, and then continued: "Don't you get the joke, Vivian? The excitement of the game and the fall have braced up those sagging optic nerves of mine and put 'em right. Before, my sight was dim and shadowy; now it's clear and sharp."

Abruptly he stopped, and in wonderment and awe at the miracle which had happened, Vivian gazed deep into his face. "Oh, my darling," she whispered, "can it be true?"

"Of course it's true!" shouted Lucas.

"And it means that you won't be a sick-nurse for life if you marry me. It means——"

"It means," cut in Vivian, "that I'm going to be the happiest girl in the world!"

\* \* \* \* \*

It was as Lucas guessed, and old Seymour-Chater, the specialist, at first sceptical, had to admit that the very thing he had feared would hasten blindness had, in fact, performed a natural operation and cured the affection. Under the strain of emotion and physical exhaustion, followed by a blow and a period of unconsciousness, the nerves had become taut again and would remain so "until the next bang you get on your head," finished Chater.

"That's in the lap of the gods," laughed Lucas. "But if I hadn't hit out and galloped, I'd still be sitting lonely in the twilight, instead of preparing for my wedding."



## FROM EXILE.

**I** LONG to see the blackthorns' filmy veil,  
A mist of lace flung out across the hedge,  
And golden streams of gorse spilt on the edge,  
Just where the hill stoops down to meet the vale;

Fair primroses in fragile loveliness,  
And bluebells swaying in the fragrant breeze,  
And presently the snowy hawthorn trees,  
Each one a bride in dainty wedding dress.

And then I want to smell the wild-rose flowers,  
To feel the downland air blow soft and sweet,  
To touch the little downflowers at my feet,  
And hear the larks sing through the golden hours!

L. G. MOBERLY.





"I haven't met this fellow Dagmar yet, but when I do  
I want my cue."

# IF X BE UNKNOWN

By MORGAN JOHNSON

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

**R**OSS CHARTERIS was a younger son. That undeniable fact constituted his crime. Had he entered the world five minutes sooner, he would have been riding in a Rolls-Royce instead of opening mother-of-pearl shell in a fetid six-by-three cabin, where the sugar and flour bags were a-crawl with cockroach, and the mercury in the thermometer had apparently forgotten how to fall below the eighth notch.

Six months earlier a luxurious P. & O. liner had deposited him upon the Tanjong Paga at Singapore, eyeglass jammed in his chubby, good-humoured face, exuding a touching faith in human nature, and sundry

crisp notes from the five hundred burning a hole in his wallet.

After a dignified, globe-trotting saunter through Java, he found himself at Port Darwin. There Fate, in the guise of a glib Cornstalker equipped with a chunk of fool's gold and a fertile imagination, dealt him the first knock-down blow.

The bursting of the Eldorado bubble in the spinifex wastes of the Kimberley district coincided with the Cornstalker's hurried departure by steamer to Fremantle, richer by some four hundred odd pounds than when he arrived.

Ross, volcanic with puerile rage, having



partially recovered and digested the unpalatable fact that he was penniless, was in some danger at first of sliding into the fashionable and precarious profession of beachcombing; but an innate sense of decency, combined with an aversion from bedding with hermit crabs, drove him in desperation to a square-headed but kindly Dutch saloon owner. Thereafter, eyeglass still wedged, he presided over the destinies of a cocktail bar, mixing exotic, rainbow drinks with a kick like a Sankey hammer.

In the matter of the eyeglass he was adamant, and, after some good-natured chaff, the denizens of Van Duzen's bar began to like it. It tickled their sense of the ridiculous to be served by "the guy with the pane" and the Oxford manner.

In the end, however, the eyeglass proved his downfall. With the childish insolence of his kind, a bull-necked, half-drunken giant of a Swede one night leaned across and, with a blundering grab, purloined it. Face contorted, he proceeded to survey the reeking saloon. "Haw!" he rasped, swelling with triumphant braggadocio. "Haw!"

Behind the linoleumed bar Ross's stooping body grew rigid. His good-natured face became a white mask, the blue eyes glittered. Just as the roar of laughter ascended, his hand tightened over the square-faced gin bottle and drew back. Thereafter reigned chaos.

In the confusion, while they picked up the blood- and gin-soaked Swede, he stood like one in a dream. A hawk-eyed, sun-scorched pearler tapped him suddenly upon the arm.

"Say, son," he drawled, with an amused glint, "by the time they've finished trepanning Olsen, the R.M.'ll want to have a word with you. My advice is—hop it! *Lakas!*"

Divesting himself of his white apron, Ross hopped it. Within the hour he left for Broome by way of Fitzroy River in company with a winding Levantine string of camels.

At Broome, eyeglass-less and somewhat the worse for wear, he fell in with the Jew Aaronshon. Behind the cool, green chicks of Jimmy's bar Aaronshon offered him a job as shell-opener upon one of his fleet of luggers. "Can you bokth a compath?" he lisped.

"Rather! Good Heavens, yes!" lied Ross desperately, not knowing the difference between a ship's compass and a musical box.

"Splendith!" beamed Aaronshon, rubbing his fat little hands and hazarding shrewdly in his foxy mind that the youngster lied. However, it was a gift from the gods to get a white man and one not a-crawl with gin at that. "Splendith! Meet me at Streeteth Jetty at ten to-morrow, and we'll fith it!"

## II.

THAT was how Ross Charteris, with murder in his heart, came to be sitting in the stinking cabin of the *Sandfly*, opening mother-of-pearl shell in a temperature bordering upon ninety-eight degrees Fahrenheit. Five more precious minutes of existence and he would have been an Honourable, lounging through a lotus-bud existence and wintering at Biarritz. He had been cheated. It was hard luck!

Opener in hand and singlet wet with sweat, he paused to brood upon his fate. He had brooded thus for five long, dreary, monotonous months—months of searing sun and utter, torturing loneliness. Each fresh day resembled the last—a repetition of petty, infuriating miseries. He hated to the point of nausea the sickly condensed milk, the tins of rancid, swimming butter, the stringy corned beef, the tepid, chlorided water, and, over and above all, the eternal overpowering stench of decaying shell.

The only white man with whom he had exchanged words was the skipper of the schooner which picked him up every two months to take off the fruits of his diving. Usually these consisted of mother-of-pearl, with occasionally, very occasionally, a pearl or two, and a bottle of barracq. In addition, the skipper renewed his provisions and delivered instructions from Aaronshon.

Aaronshon! Ross ground his teeth at the bare thought of the foxy little Jew, and longed with an unutterable longing to get his two hands about that gentleman's podgy, fat-creased neck. It was Aaronshon who had forced him to work this lonely bed off Timor; Aaronshon who, with careful cunning, had made no mention of the schooner which was to keep him from intercourse with his fellows until the lay-up season five months hence. Five more months of undiluted hell! Good Heavens, it wouldn't bear thinking of! He would become a gibbering maniac in another fortnight!

With a flare of vicious, murderous irritation he flung the curved opener at the bunch of over-ripe bananas swinging in the corner. The bout of dengue from which he was just



recovering had injected blood-streaks into the china whites of his blue eyes. The chubby, good-humoured look which he had brought from England had long since been shorn from his face like the bloom from a peach; it was sallow with fever and the sear of the blistering sun.

A patter of feet and clatter of gear overhead, where the pitch was bubbling in the deck seams, roused him. Osaki was going to dive again.

A shadow blocked the cabin entrance, and the yellow, grinning face of the little Jap peered in. "Me go down now, boss," he announced cheerfully. "Watchem that tender; he hell bad temper to-day!"

Picking up a stained, battered topee, the white man swung wearily up the steps. "I'll watch him," he declared grimly. "I'll murder him if he plays any of his monkey tricks! Tell him, Osaki!"

Leaning against the hot white cabin-top, he gloomily surveyed the preparations for the descent. He chewed the cud upon the fact that trouble with the crew was brewing; all, with the exception of Osaki, were grumbling. If it was not the bad rice, it was the foul water, or both. Only yesterday Karam, the Malay tender, had insolently pushed a bowl of weevilly flour under his nose and demanded redress. He got it in the shape of Ross's right fist backed by twelve stone of bone and muscle. Thereafter he proved sullen and dangerous, and required watching.

Two pockmarked Manila men and another Malay, Sammy by name, completed the quota. The latter was a true-to-type *orang batu*—man of the sea—with webbed toes and bowed legs, and to him, Ross in his sucking innocence, had delegated the navigation of the *Sandfly*. Of the lot, Osaki only was to be trusted. Being a first-class diver, scared neither by "gophers" nor man-grabbing clams, he wrung fat bonuses out of Aaronshon for his wife and family in far Nippon.

Lighting a black cheroot, he watched Osaki take a final survey to see if pipe and life-line were clear, swing leaden boots clumsily over the side and sit waiting for the tender to screw on the grotesque iron helmet. Karam, catching the white man's gaze, scowled blackly as he stepped forward.

The pump commenced its gurgling wump, wump, and Osaki, pushing off from the rope ladder, bobbed in the easy swell like some huge inflated cork. Then, opening his air-valve, he gradually submerged, trailing a

comet's tail of silvery bubbles which broke lazily to the surface.

Ross, eyes upon the aching, speckless rim of bronze-hot horizon, fell into a dismal reverie. They were fishing in twenty fathoms on a sandy bottom, which meant that Osaki would be down about fifteen minutes.

Forward, Sammy's naked, coppered back, glistening with beads of sweat, rose and fell like a mechanical automaton. Karam sucked his teeth noisily as the life-line between his hands shivered to Osaki's landing tug.

"The pig is down!" he observed softly. Simultaneously both cast furtive glances at the motionless figure aft. "He dreams," purred Karam, with sombre significance.

Between grunts Sammy expectorated a stream of betel juice. His pocked face grinned with exertion.

"A prau like this in the creeks of Sumatra and we catch many fat flies," Karam ground out. "Six more strokes only shall I give the yellow pig!" Aloud he emphasised each thrust: "*Satoo—dooah—teego—ampat—*" At the sixth he stepped back. "*Sudah habis!—finish!*" His teeth came together with a click.

Aft, missing the rhythmical beat, Ross jerked upright. Like a stab of midsummer lightning, warning flashed to his brain.

"Get on with that pumping!" he called sharply. "Karam, you dog—"

Chilled, the words died on his lips. He stiffened. A knife flashed in the sun. Karam, maliciously a-grin, slashed savagely. Like a giant snake the air-pipe writhed into the water, hissing as it went.

Ross swore, awed. Robbed of volition, he stood gaping; the vicious suddenness of the affair paralysed him. Then he visioned the man below, smothering, drowning in the green semi-gloom, and, like quicksilver, anger stabbed through his veins.

He leapt cat-like for the cabin just as the two Malays pattered at him across the deck. "You fool," he sobbed, "you fool!" Only in the nick of time, with a fraction of a second to spare, did he reach the Colt beneath his pillow.

Sammy's knife, singing past his ear like a great hornet, ripped into the wainscoting and hung there, quivering. Karam, baulked by his own impetuosity, pulled up short upon the second rung. He looked into the muzzle of the Colt and showed his teeth like a trapped animal.



For just a moment Ross hesitated. Then, remembering Osaki, his blue eyes grew hard as agate. With a grim deliberation he shot the snarling tender through the heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

Five minutes later, while the stench of cordite still hung in the cabin, from a sky of unwinking blue the sirocco burst upon the *Sandfly* like a gigantic charge of shot shattering on unwary deck. There was no warning save the fact that the bottom had dropped out of the glass, and at the moment that instrument might have been in the moon as far as Ross Charteris was concerned. Overhead, Sammy's agonised yell galvanised him. "*Tuan! Tuan! Big wave he come!*"

Upon the heels of the cry, with a roar like an express train shrieking through a tunnel, the dreaded scourge of the Timor Sea leapt at them. A sail boomed like a cannon before it broke, screaming, into shreds. Caught broadside on, the lugger, shuddering sickeningly, careened over as if pressed down by the hand of a giant, and Ross, clawing desperately up the cabin steps, heard the staccato crack of masts snapping like rotten sticks.

At the top, in a world which in an eye-wink had changed from placid calm to bellowing chaos, an avalanche of foam-flecked water deluged him, leaving him stunned and gasping. He caught a kaleidoscopic glimpse of Sammy's face, yellow with stark fear, beside the flailing tiller; then, mouth open in a soundless scream, it disappeared into eternity upon the crest of a devouring, sea-green wave.

Thereafter to Ross the whole affair developed into gibbering nightmare. Steel fingers plucked at him, threatening every moment to tear arms and legs from their precarious hold. As if resenting his puny efforts, the wind battered him unceasingly, tearing at mouth and ears, deafening, suffocating.

Spreadeagled across the cabin-top, a vague impression assailed him that it was moving, sliding. In an agony of terror he clung, leech-like. There came a thunder of waters, a roaring in ears and brain, flash of lights, and then black, merciful oblivion.

### III.

THE ancient Greeks were nothing if not picturesque. They believed implicitly in the three sister Furies who sit aloft shuttling a tangled skein for each one of us struggling punily through the gigantic maze called Life.

In the matter of Ross Charteris's destiny, one can only assume that the particular sister handling the threads of his fate must have eased her shears and relented at the ultimate moment. The swelling ultramarine comber which tossed him playfully over the hungry teeth of the reef and bore him in hissing triumph to the brown-ribbed beach was assuredly no ordinary one.

An eager seagull, after swooping low to inspect, flapped forlornly away with a squawk of resentment. Life to its scavenging soul was anathema. Shuffling seawards upon awkward flippers, a green turtle paused to pry curiously at the damp inanimate mass, and then, hawk-head probing the air, made abrupt deviation. A scavenging hermit crab snipped tentatively at the limp fingers.

After æons of trackless, floating subconsciousness, the flickering, thin flame that was life within the sodden body of Ross Charteris struggled to the surface and became dimly aware of a voice. It came as from an immense distance—a mere pinpoint of sound, but clear, like a bell.

"If  $x$  be unknown," intoned the voice solemnly, "and  $y$  be known, then  $x \times y$  equals—oh, I wonder what it will equal?"

Puzzled, groping, Ross opened his eyes. The burning glare of the sun struck raw agony through his salt-rimmed lids. Lying very still, he gasped with pain.

"I suppose I'm dead," he told himself patiently, "but a mathematical hell wasn't included in Dante, that I'll swear."

Then on a sudden he saw the girl, caught the flash of hazel eyes in sun-tanned, Madonna-curved face, red lips parted in quick breathing excitement, and, with a stab of sheer wonder electrifying him, struggled to an elbow.

"You're not real, of course," he croaked, "but why the equation?"

"One of my own," she explained, voice soft as velvet, going over him with eager, searching gaze. "It means a lot, especially  $x$  the unknown factor. That's *you!* I hate equations—they always make me think of herrings!" Her slim hands, boyishly brown, came together. "Oh, you're big, you look strong—perhaps you'll do!"

A grimace, intended for a humorous grin, contorted his stiffened features. "I'm as strong as a motherless kitten, and my bruises would keep a chemist's shop working for a fortnight. Still, I'm alive and human and hungry. Perhaps you can direct me to the nearest restaurant?"



White teeth flashed gloriously. "Bravo!" she applauded. "You've got sand; you're not quitting. I was so afraid you'd whine. You make the fourth on the island, latitude and longitude Heaven knows where! We've been here six months, and, bar the turtles and a stray dugong or two, you're our first visitor. As you'll probably be here for the rest of your life, you'd better make up your mind to like it."

Tottering to his feet, he got his first good look at her. She was vital, alive, taut as a bowstring with vibrant, physical health. The tattered garment which had once been a frock served only to enhance the exquisite curves of her slim, straight body. Hair flew free, vivid as a field of corn scorched by an August sun; feet and shapely calves were brown and bare.

She mocked him defiantly. "I once shopped in Bond Street," she giped, "centuries ago. Now I'm making a reed skirt!" Her face changed, glowed, and she flung up careless arms. "I'm a pagan, a sun-worshipper!" she chanted. "The lagoon is my mirror, hibiscus my hairpins, frangipani my perfume. Who wants more?"

"Quicksilver!" murmured Ross, stirred by her leaping, clamouring vitality. "I shall call you 'Quicksilver'!"

Flushed, breathless, a-quiver with exuberance, she smiled at him delightfully. Then, head on one side: "You're a bit sea-soiled, but a vast improvement on Dagmar," she confided.

"Dagmar?" Ross felt a little pang of jealousy. "Who's Dagmar?"

The delightful face sobered, curved, mobile lips straightened. "Oh, Dagmar! That's *y*—the proven factor. He was wrecked with us. He's got tattooed arms and a bull neck. Dad calls him a throw-back." The hazel eyes widened innocently. "He loves me—wants me!"

"Oh, does he?" growled Ross. "It strikes me forcibly that what is wanted on this island is a little more competition. We must see what we can do!" He paused, frowning, body inclined in a listening attitude. "Funny!" he muttered. "I keep hearing something clicking, like a wood-pecker. There! No, it's stopped now. I expect it's my head; I've got a confounded lump on it as big as a pigeon's egg."

At that, quick with sympathy and contrition, she reviled herself. "Brute! Brute! What a brute I am to keep you in the sun!"

"Heartless!" agreed Ross gravely. "Perfectly heartless!"

Their eyes met and held, and the penitence in hers was irritatingly veiled behind demure lids.

"As if," declared Ross indignantly, "as if I met a sea-nymph every day of my life and wasn't enjoying every blessed moment of it!"

#### IV.

NEXT morning, following upon a breakfast of roasted skipjack and turtle eggs, Ross Charteris admitted himself "beaten to a frazzle." Somehow he couldn't quite get a grip of the situation; things eluded him, kept him guessing. His ideas of castaways upon desert islands had been garnered from popular magazines and "The Blue Lagoon," but in no way did his strange companions in distress act up to their prototypes of fiction.

Take the girl's father, for instance. Suave, grey-haired, more like an American business man than anything else, he had greeted Charteris's sun-baked, sea-pickled appearance with an entire absence of fuss or curiosity; his daughter might have been showing him a new sea-shell she had picked from the lagoon.

"Pleased to meet you," he had murmured courteously. "You'll be able to share my tent to-night in place of Dagmar; he's gone off hunting."

"Tent!" ejaculated the amazed Ross, unable to credit his ears.

"Oh, yes," cut in the girl quickly; "we saved two from the schooner when she went down. I sleep in one, and Dad and Dagmar share the other. When he comes back to-morrow, we must fix up something for you."

Ross thanked her absently. Truth to tell, he was conscious of acute disappointment at Dagmar's absence; he was anxious to view this mysterious *y* of the girl's equation in the flesh and size him up. Whenever he thought of him he experienced a curious hot glow at the top of his spine, such as an angry fox-terrier might feel when an imminent fight causes his bristles to rise.

Next morning, therefore, saw him sitting in gloomy retrospection before the ashes of the breakfast fire. His mind ran in puzzled fashion over the conversation he had had with Mr. Laurence in the tent last night. The information he had gleaned was meagre in the extreme, and had left him with a strange, baffled feeling of incompleteness.

A shadow crossed him, and he looked up



to discover Mr. Laurence regarding him quizzically. "I'm going to leave you in Sheila's hands this morning," he said

trade wind; the surf in the distance crooned against the reef like a sleepy kitten.

Suddenly the flaps of the girl's tent were



suavely. "She will do the honours of our domain." And with a genial nod he strolled away into the tropical foliage. Ross gazed after his broad, swaying back with a troubled frown. Then, like forked lightning stabbing, the truth came to him. He had seen Mr. Laurence before! Face, manner, action—all were familiar. He cast his thoughts back over remote scenes and places—dinners, receptions, race meetings—but the solution eluded him. At last, impatiently, he shook the problem of Mr. Laurence from his head.

It was a day of blue sky and a soft, cooing

flung aside. Poised in the doorway, lissom and straight, she seemed to Ross more like a sea-nymph than ever. Her hair, caught by the sun, shone like a golden flame.

"Lazybones!" she gibed. "You were snoring when I went down to bathe this morning."

He grinned in answer to the irresistible witchery of her eyes. "No bathing dress," he thrust back, "and I've had enough of the sea to last me a century." Then gravely: "Look here, I want a chat with you—I'm fogged."

She looked at him, momentarily startled.



After a pause, red lips curving: "Shall we adjourn to my boudoir?"

"Your *what*?"

"Come and see."

The island was glowing in the early sun like some great scented garden. White frangipani flowers, red hibiscus, purple passion blooms, all mingled together into one heady, exotic perfume. Giant Timor pigeons slid from tree to tree like animated blue balls; monkeys chattered and grimaced before swinging themselves into green obscurity. In the tops of the tall, mop-headed pandanus trees flocks of multi-hued parrots squawked and murmured petulantly, or, taking fright, shrieked away in rocketing rainbow bedlam. Far off, down dim, green aisles, a jackass cackled and screeched in demoniac ecstasy.

As they walked, the girl plucked a great

"Penny!" she challenged at last, piqued at his silence.

"This," said Ross thoughtfully. "In six months has it never struck you to make a raft, provision her, and get away?"

She looked queerly at him and sighed. "You're forgetting Dagmar," she said softly.

Ross swore beneath his breath. "Oh, confound Dagmar! What's he got to do with it?"

"Everything! You see, Dagmar—" She hesitated, white brow corrugated.

"Don't bother—I can guess," he interrupted grimly. "Dagmar's crowned himself king of this blessed island. The brute's tyrannising your father, pulling the cave-man stuff and keeping you here so as to make sure of you. Is that it?"



"Science flung to the four winds, both men, slipping, sliding, sweating, slogged and punched like two automatons."

hoop of blood-red hibiscus and with nimble fingers entwined the flowers in her hair. Lizards and iguanas scuttled from their path with undignified haste.

She nodded dumbly, head averted, shoulders quivering.

Ross, aglow with indignant wrath, strode on, jaw set, brow like thunder. It was



getting a bit thick. Why, the fellow was a pest, an unscrupulous bully ! Suddenly, at a suspicious noise, he stopped dead and glared.

"What are you laughing at?" he demanded fiercely.

"Laughing! Me!" She made an immense effort, but the two treacherous dimples refused to be denied.

"I believe you like this Dagmar fellow," accused Ross furiously. "It's all a blind—a bluff to satisfy your vanity. You're making a fool of me!"

She froze at that and gave him back a Roland for his Oliver.

"That's impossible!" she declared coldly, and, chin deliciously tip-tilted, left him staring.

After a while he followed in her wake, dejected, miserable, and suddenly, to the accompaniment of murmuring water, stumbled upon a slice of tropical paradise. A cascade, milky-white, foamed from its rocky crevice, and where the sun caught the spraying moisture an iridescent, ever-moving spectrum glowed. From the crystal-clear pool a bunch of Java sparrows, vivid, animated splashes of reds and golds, rioted up and twittered away.

Eyes challenging his sullen face, she dropped him a dignified curtsy. "My boudoir, sir!" she mocked.

The young man, thoroughly disgruntled, scowled. "No doubt Dagmar appreciates its beauty to the full!"

She gurgled at that, his peevish rancour seeming to tickle her enormously. With a careless abandon she splashed through the pool, climbed to the rock in the centre, and sat there eyeing him with a sudden wistfulness which set his pulses drumming. She swung one slender foot leisurely.

"I don't think you're very nice to me," she murmured at last.

He moved uneasily.

"You see, I expected so much from you," she went on reproachfully. "I thought the sea had sent me a factor which would solve my equation."

"Not my fault," he growled. "You're so full of this confounded Dagmar!"

She considered him gravely, twirling an hibiscus flower provokingly between her red lips. "Jealous?"

He reddened. "Oh, rot! I haven't even seen the fellow!"

"Then what makes you so horrid?" She was probing him, merciless as a dissecting surgeon.

At that his patience snapped. He came

deliberately through the water and stood knee-deep in front of her. His temples were pulsing ominously.

"Look here," he said thickly, "I haven't met this fellow Dagmar yet, but when I do I want my cue. Now, the truth—do you love him or not?"

She fluttered under his direct attack; it was crude, not according to rules, but effective. As on the beach the day before, their eyes met and clung.

He set his teeth, sweating. "Do you?" he persisted doggedly.

"Why——" she whispered, almost intimidated. And then, with a rebellious flash: "Oh, find out!"

He took a short cut. Sweeping her roughly from the rock, he kissed her lips. The hibiscus flower, crushed, dropped unheeded to the water and floated between them. She stirred in his arms, sighed, and kissed him. A marauding white-headed sea-hawk, swooping tentatively to the pool, suddenly saw the motionless figures and, cursing harshly, wheeled reefwards. At last, flushed, laughing, sunburnt hands against his chest, she pushed him away.

"Cannibal!" she gasped. "Please!"

Triumphant, glowing, he released her. "I'll get busy on that raft to-day," he cried. "In a fortnight we'll be off and leave Dagmar to stew in his juice!"

Woman-like, she resented his male arrogance of conquest. "Perhaps he won't let you!" she teased, fair head slanted, eyes dancing with mischief. "He's very big and strong!"

Ross snorted with contempt. "Why——" He stopped abruptly, stiffening.

"What is it?" she cried, alarmed.

His puzzled gaze searched the scented frangipanes. "That confounded clicking noise! Hear it? No, it's stopped."

"Oh, bother your silly old noise!" She laughed and offered her adorable lips again.

## V.

THE lagoon lay like a sheet of molten brass beneath the afternoon sun. In the shade of a blossom-hung hibiscus bush the girl allowed the warm sand to trickle idly through her fingers.

"Br-r-r!" she said suddenly, nose wrinkled. "Smoky cities! Fogs and sleet and snow!"

He nodded understandingly. "I know—rotten! Never mind, we'll spend our honeymoon in Kopang."

Lovely hazel eyes stared at him in blank



dismay. "Honeymoon!" she echoed, startled.

"Put out your hand!" he ordered in approved cave-man style.

Intimidated, she mechanically obeyed. With solemn mien, he slid two hibiscus flowers twined into the shape of a ring about a slim finger.

"Engaged!" he announced gravely. "Sorry it's so primitive. I'll replace it with a more substantial one when we reach civilisation. Platinum's the latest craze, I believe."

She threw back her head in joyous, whole-hearted merriment. "How utterly ridiculous!" she cried breathlessly. "Why, I—"

"A perfect idyll!" broke in a sneering voice from behind. "What one might term a riot of Stacpoolism. It's really a shame to butt in!"

Wide-eyed, the girl trailed into nervous silence. "Dagmar!" she faltered, paling.

Ross got tensely to his feet. In silence the two men glared at each other.

Dagmar, tanned and swarthy, was the taller by half a head; his torso, swathed in a tight-fitting singlet, was that of a giant. Ross, with a twinge of dismay, noted his magnificent physique.

Dagmar's eyes stared arrogantly from under thick, black brows; immense leg-of-mutton arms, burnt to a rich mahogany, lay folded across his burnt chest.

His gaze left Ross contemptuously and wandered to the girl. "Come!" he snarled, crooking a hairy forefinger.

To Ross's indignant amazement, she obeyed meekly, without question; all the fire and vitality seemed to have drained from her.

Dagmar put a paw under her chin and sharply tilted it. "A case of when the cat's away, eh?" he demanded brutally.

Ross could stand no more. Quick as he was, however, the swarthy young giant was quicker, and, ducking under Ross's furious swing, came up to plant a vicious sledge-hammer drive upon the other's mouth.

The luckless Ross went down as if pole-axed. Little blinding points of light flashed and snapped inside his brain; the whole beach seemed to tilt under his supine form like some big, inclined soup plate.

He lay dazed, striving to catch up to his scudding thoughts. Sand gritted between loosened teeth; he began to sense the warm trickle of blood upon his numbed mouth.

He heard the girl cry out in sharp anger: "Stupid! You've spoilt it all!"

He wondered owlishly to whom she was talking. A funny thing to say!

And then the cold, deadly fury which had seized him in Van Duzen's bar, when the drunken Swede had snatched his monocle, once again surged over him. He would kill this black bully.

He struggled to his feet, brain clearing, and saw Dagmar, arms dropped, eyeing him with a curious anxiety. Then, jaw-line white with determination, he hurtled across the beach.

The fight that followed was an epic. Science flung to the four winds, both men, slipping, sliding, sweating, slogged and punched like two automatons.

Instinctively going for the body, Ross grunted exultingly as he felt knuckles drive home hard upon Dagmar's ribs. Gasping, the latter tried to break, but Ross, merciless, tasting the fruits of victory, followed inexorably.

Dagmar, cursing excitedly, rallied and slammed right and left monotonously to the other's face. It was patent, however, that the sting had departed from his blows.

Ross, boring in, grinned ferociously. "Got you, you black devil!" he muttered, and loosed a pile-hammering drive to the stomach. Dagmar yelped his agony and, falling forward, grappled despairingly.

Panting, sweating, Ross strove to disengage from the leech-like embrace. Finally, tripping in the sand, he fell in turn, sprawling exhausted over the groaning Dagmar.

"Well," ejaculated an admiring voice from above, "that's the prettiest dog fight I've seen for years!"

Ross twisted his pummelled body into a sitting posture. He stared in sheer bewilderment from his one unclosed eye; his mouth gaped.

"Where—what—who the devil are you?" he brought out at last.

The stranger, portly, rubicund, neatly clad in cool holland, removed his cigar. "Shoot a close-up, Bud. He looks the part to a T!"

Into the fast-narrowing range of Ross's vision moved two figures. The foremost, shirt-sleeved, perspiring, carried a black object mounted upon a tripod. Stooping, he began to turn a handle.

Upon Ross's ears broke a familiar irritating click-click.



Truth, violent, illuminating, burst suddenly upon his groping brain. His mouth opened and closed like that of an overfed goldfish.

"Good Heavens!" he said at last brokenly. "It's a blessed cinematograph!"

The chubby-jowelled stranger grinned. "Cheer up, boy!" he sympathised. "You've put over a colossal bump. Talk of desert island heroes—why, you're the strongest meat in that line I've filmed for many a year!"

A muffled, agonised wail suddenly arose. "Cy, for Heaven's sake, call this wild-cat off! He's mussed up my eating apparatus for ever!"

Ross began to laugh weakly. "Shut up, you lump of beef!" He looked around appealingly. "Won't someone tell me what it all means? This place looks more like Piccadilly Circus than a desert island!"

The plump individual removed his expensive Panama and wiped a bald head with a silk handkerchief. "Sure!" he said heartily. "We framed it on you from the beginning. But first let me introduce the company. I'm Cyrus B. Flack, producer to the Atlantis Film Company. The gentleman on my right with the cultured grey headpiece is Mr. Duval Laurence. Pardon?"

Ross groaned again. "Nothing," he said. "I knew I'd seen him before—probably in one of the London cinemas. Go on!"

"The shy heroine in the background, covered with blushes, is known to the screen world as Miss Sheila Dalton. The gentleman you're sitting on is our strong primitive cave-man—"

"Oh, rats!" interrupted Ross wearily. "He's about as strong as a canary. But what I want to know is—"

"Coming, coming," soothed Mr. Flack. "Like this. We hit the island a week ago from Timor—ideal setting, local colour, atmosphere—everything. Then Dorman, who pulled the hero stuff, lay down under us—appendicitis. I yanked him back in the motor-boat to Timor and sat down to curse the luck.

"It was then Miss Dalton found you battered and forlorn upon the beach. You were the real goods, no fake—human

document—gee! I saw it all in a flash. You fitted in as no actor could have done, but, Jehoshaphat, it was some business keeping you in the dark!"

"Oh, I heard your rotten old camera all right!" growled Ross testily.

"Not always. We used the telescopic lens on you most of the time," declared Mr. Flack placidly. He smacked his lips. "That scene in the island pool now was the real thing in sob stuff!"

A dull brick red surged over Ross's face. "Of all the dirty, underhand tricks——" he burst out.

"Oh, can it!" snapped Mr. Flack. "I'm no piker. Here's my offer. Taught a few tips, you're better than Dorman. Two hundred dollars a week—picture-making or not. I've got six South Sea subjects on the board. I've heard of a cute little setting in the Arafura Sea, and that's our next place of call. Yes or no?"

Ross stared stupefied. "Two hundred dollars! You must be mad!"

"H'm! P'raps. Don't think so."

Ross climbed to his feet; there was a strange little gleam in his one unbattered eye.

"Half a minute," he said, and made for the girl.

"Congratulations," he said grimly, "on your acting!"

She flushed and then laughed.

"There's just one thing I'd like to know," he said slowly. "That pool scene—was it all acting?"

She was silent, tongue-tied.

"Please tell me," he urged. "It makes a lot of difference; you see, Flack's just offered me a job."

"Would it matter very much?" she murmured.

"Try me and see."

Her eyes came up to his with a light in them which set his pulses leaping. "Well," she faltered, "I—I don't think it *was* all acting."

There followed a long, expressive pause, and then:

"Flack," roared Ross joyously, "I'm yours! Anything from hammering Dagmar thrice daily to swimming the Arafura Sea!"





# THE MAGIC OF KAHDOOSH

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

**K**AHDOOSH, the Man with a Nose like a Bottle, sat on a flat stone that happened to be on the west coast of Greenland, and stared gloomily at a cluster of topecks huddled on a strip of ground near the shore. The sun was bright and very hot. He scrutinised a pack of mangy dogs hunting for offal along the edge of the sea, saw a group of women go off in the oomiak, or skin boat, screaming with laughter and a great splashing of paddles, and noted with cold and critical gaze that Larpan, the Cross-Eyed One, had got into his kayak. He was going to the rocky islands two miles away over the emerald water to determine whether the walrus had yet arrived.

Watching the dipping stroke of double blades that flashed like mirrors in the sun, Kahdoosh felt more than ever a violent antipathy to Larpan. The immediate cause of this was Peegish, the Chatterer, a cylindrical maiden of nineteen years.

Again the eternal triangle. What need to point out that whether in Greenland or Tooting, whether beneath silk or caribou skin, the human heart aspires with the same longings, throbs with the same profound passion. Tooting may be more voluble than Greenland, but it can harbour no deeper emotions. The Thames Embankment may be more impressive than the rocky waste in which Peegish was acknowledged to be the leading flapper, but no lover ever leaned on its massive parapet and gazed more moodily at Chelsea Bridge than Kahdoosh now gazed at his particular section of the Arctic Ocean.

The situation had grown acute. It is probable that had the tribe of Kahdoosh lived, say, on the Beaufort Sea, where things are more primitive and old-fashioned, and whaling ships seldom penetrate, the matter had been settled months ago in a practical

and expeditious manner. But here, in Greenland waters, one was, so to speak, on the fringes of society. It was nothing novel that a Dundee whaler should slide like a ghost into the bay, and drop anchor with a roar of chain that roused the birds for a mile round. Then there were visits on both sides, and as often as not some of the men joined up for the cruise, returning later with wealth and new rifles, a much enlarged and decorated vocabulary, and a general air of superiority that the others sometimes found a trifle irritating.

In the case of Larpan, who had made one such voyage, the trouble was that he then acquired an even more full equipment, having come back nothing short of a full-blown magician. This excited a vast amount of interest and amusement, and the first *soirée* he gave was in the topeck of Hadjvick, the Man who Lurched when he Walked. Hadjvick was the father of Peegish, and that damsel, with much giggling and flashing of black eyes, was in the front row. Kahdoosh, as not infrequently in such cases, lounged somewhat superciliously at the back against the skin wall.

Larpan began by pulling a red cotton handkerchief from the back of Hadjvick's neck, and accumulated a pile of rabbits' feet from various members of the audience, all of whom disclaimed the possession of such valueless articles. Then he uncovered the skull of a jar seal between the feet of Chantook, the Fat Man, who stared at the thing incredulously amid shouts of laughter. With an insolent glint in his eye, he called up Kahdoosh, and drew from his pocket a metal mirror used exclusively by the women. This made Kahdoosh very hot and angry, for he knew he looked like a fool. Finally the slant-eyed Peegish herself was summoned, and her well-oiled hair yielded a large collection of walrus teeth, while that



young woman gave a series of little shrieks of admiring surprise, each one of them a dagger in the heart of Kahdoosh. It is true that at the beginning of the performance the figure of Larpan was noticeably bulky, and later of merely average girth, but Kahdoosh could not summon courage to call attention to the fact. Magic was magic! The public had no desire to investigate second causes. Without question it was Larpan's night of triumph.

That was a week ago, and Peegish enjoyed the present state of affairs immensely. To be desired by two men, both of prominence in the tribe, meant much to any girl in Greenland. Larpan was a little the older, also not quite as well off as Kahdoosh, but he had unquestionable resources. Also he was better-tempered. Kahdoosh, on the other hand, was a great hunter. He did not laugh so much, but in hard times might make a safer partner. Hadjvick pointed out these things, and asked the girl what she was going to do.

"For another six months," he concluded,

man wise. The tongue that is always travelling never arrives. As for these two men, it may be that I will give you to the one who makes the greatest magic in six months from now."

"The fingers of Kahdoosh are not long and clever like those of Larpan."

Hadjvick grunted. "Again how like a woman. Is it not the head that directs the fingers? It is well that you tell them both what I say, and in six months we shall see."

Peegish did tell them, with sidelong looks and much digging of a blunt, seal-shod foot into the stony soil of Greenland. Then she told everyone in the village. Larpan heard it, smiling, confident, and determined to surpass all previous achievements in the way of illusion. Kahdoosh heard it, glum, frowning, with a distant desire for murder in his heart, knowing very well that, practice as he might, he could never bring the skull of a seal out of the ground, or walrus teeth from a girl's hair. Magic! What had he to do with magic?

All this, and a good deal more, was in his



"Driving his own boat over the smooth water with quick, vicious strokes."

"I will feed you, but no more. If you have not chosen by then, I will choose for you. I have spoken."

"Which will you choose?" asked Peegish thoughtfully.

He threw a stone at a dog. "There was once a woman of our tribe who, being a fool like all women, married a magician because he did wonderful things. In the middle of the first bad winter it happened that he could not kill anything, and she starved to death. His magic could not get through the fur of a single seal."

Peegish smiled. "Has, then, a woman no magic of her own?"

"Enough to make wise men at times very foolish, but not enough to make a foolish

mind when, sitting on the rock, he observed on the horizon a white speck that he knew to be not a gull's wing, but the foresail of a whaler. He watched her grow till the crumpled wave at her stem was visible. She came on into the mouth of the bay, and anchored a quarter mile out. Kahdoosh, staring, remembered that on such a ship as this Larpan had learned his tricks. He wondered if there was any magic on this vessel. Then he saw that Larpan's kayak had altered its course and was headed for the whaler.

Something darted through his brain. He jumped up, dashed bulkily downhill, and a moment later was driving his own boat over the smooth water with quick, vicious



strokes. He reached the vessel's side at the instant when Larpan caught the tail end of a rope.

Macgovan, the captain, a hard-bitten sailor, who had killed whales from the Falklands to Spitzbergen, looked keenly at the two. He wanted only one man, and it was difficult to choose. The obvious strength of Kahdoosh was in his favour, but Larpan looked the quicker of the two. And both wanted to go. Kahdoosh waited, thinking rapidly. Presently he made a gesture.

"I am a better hunter than Larpan," he said gravely, "but not so great a man."

His rival stared, while Macgovan glanced at him curiously. "What do you mean?"

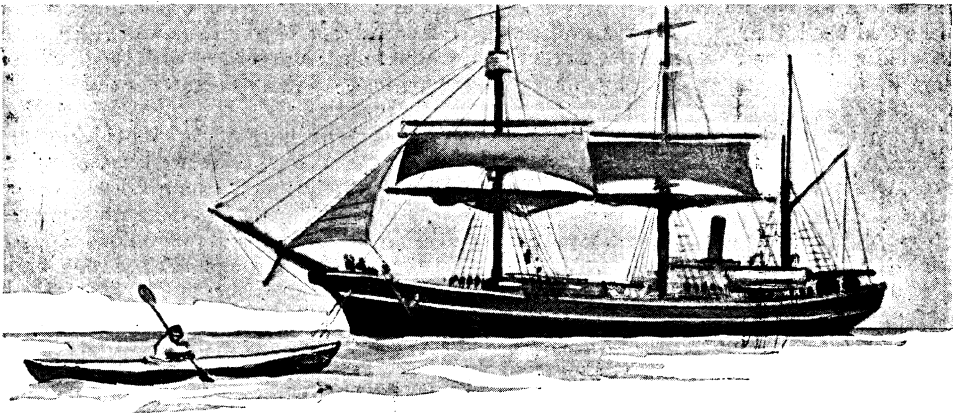
conjurer." He turned to Kahdoosh. "Can you do any of these tricks?"

The big Husky shook his head. "I am not clever enough. I can only hunt."

"Then you're the man for me. Come on board in one hour. Now, off with both of you!"

The two paddled shoreward without a word. "Not clever enough!" thought Larpan to himself. "Not clever enough!"

Kahdoosh, having no packing to do, used a good deal of that hour talking to Peegish. No details had come out, and for his side of it Larpan would see that they didn't, but it was already known in the village that both men had wanted that job, and Kahdoosh got it. Peegish learned a good



"He saw that Larpan's kayak had altered its course and was headed for the whaler."

"I am only a hunter, but he is a maker of magic."

"Eh?" grunted Macgovan. "What kind of magic?"

"Show him," said Kahdoosh.

Larpan was bursting with pride. What an astonishing tribute, he thought, and at a time like this! Hastily he borrowed a penknife from the cook and a plug of tobacco from the first mate, and brought them both out of Macgovan's ears. The latter, perhaps, was impressed, but it was hard to say what went on behind a face like his. Larpan rolled his eyes around the grinning circle of the crew, borrowed more articles, and surpassed himself.

"That is nothing," he said modestly. "I can do much more, but it takes time. Much thought have I given to these things."

"It's enough," snapped Macgovan abruptly. "You're no hunter, but a

deal more when Kahdoosh asked her to wait, just as they ask in Clapham and Mount Street.

"I go for the whale hunting," he said earnestly, "but it may be I shall go further, not coming again till the ice moves in the spring."

Peegish was impressed by the look in his eyes, but there was her father to reckon with.

"Why so long?"

"Because it is in my mind that there is a greater magic than that of Larpan, which deals only with childish things. It is that I seek, and maybe it is not to be found on any whaler. If this be so, then I go to the place where the whaler came from, and seek there."

The black eyes surveyed him with sudden respect. "Perhaps if you did not go, you might have me, anyway."

Kahdoosh took a long breath. "That is



well, but Larpan found a woman's glass in my pocket, and till I have made him a greater fool than I was then, I shall not be content. If, on the other hand, you desire this man, then take him."

This was a totally new angle for Peegish. To be told in so many words that she might marry Larpan if she wished, and be hanged to her, infested Kahdoosh with an entirely novel interest. No man had ever spoken to her like that before, and since the psychology of the feminine heart is the same on the western coast of Greenland as, say, on the shores of the Mediterranean, she liked him better than ever. And, she reflected, Larpan would help to pass the time.

"It is well," she said softly, "and I will speak to Hadjvick. It may be that he will feed me till the ice moves."

She told the latter when he was watching the whaler clear the mouth of the bay. He listened, nodded, but never took his eyes from the ship.

"Then let it be till the ice moves," he said drily. "And it is in my mind that one head is better than many long and clever fingers."

Now, of that trip, and the adventures which befell Kahdoosh, it is not necessary to write, such doings being known to many even of those who go not out in ships. There was the grind and hardship, and sleet that cut to the bone, and death close at hand many a time. There was the flight of the harpoon, the plunging leviathan, the breathless pursuit with the line tight as a banjo string over the bows, the death of leviathan, the whaler coming up to the kill like a homing gull, the flenching and rendering, and then the whole thing over again. Kahdoosh liked it all and never complained, and because he felt best when well oiled, was as strong as two horses, had no nerves, and eyes like a cormorant, he found much favour with Macgovan, who knew good stuff when it came his way.

It fell on a morning when the whaler lay becalmed, that Kahdoosh, who lounged amidships, heard voices in the galley—that is, the cook was whistling and another man singing. This was very strange, as the former seemed to be alone. Presently he came out, spat over the rail, and passed the time of day. The voice, however, continued. It was something like Macgovan's. Kahdoosh stared, and when the cook went forward he peered in through the galley window. No one there! Still the voice! At this his stomach rolled over inside him.

The cook, returning, found him gripping the rail, his whole body stiff.

"What's the matter wi' ye, Dooshy?"

"Many things. There is a devil on this ship."

"What are ye talkin' about, ye big loon?"

Kahdoosh held up a warning hand. "Listen!"

From the galley drifted the voice: "I loe a lassie, a bonnie Hiellan' lassie."

"What is it that speaks without a mouth? No man is there. Is this magic?"

Cookie grinned, hooked his arm and steered him, unwilling, to the galley door.

"It's naethin' but a bit box that the sound comes out of. Look under yon table."

Kahdoosh looked very hard, and his lips felt dry. The box wasn't much bigger than his head. Something in it was going round and round. This stopped with the noise that a dog makes when he scratches the ice. The voice ceased.

"The devil is dead," he said thickly.

"Aye, that one. Now we'll try another."

For the next quarter hour Cookie enjoyed the study of the pagan face, while the black eyes never blinked, and marvellous thoughts darted rapidly through that savage brain. Undoubtedly great magic, this—greater by far than Larpan ever dreamed of.

"The words," he said slowly, "how is it there are words without a tongue and throat? Where do they come from?"

Cookie held up a record. "They're on this, ye auld pagan."

"Who put them on?"

"I dinna ken."

"But how did he put them?"

"Simple enough. There's a place where they're made, and if you talk on to the thing it talks back."

"Like a woman?"

"Aye, verra like a woman."

"Where is that place?"

Cookie indicated the eastern horizon. "Over yonder, where we come from."

"Will it give back any kind of words, or is it they must be those of a white man?"

"Any kind."

"Then this devil does not care what he says?"

"Not a hoot."

Kahdoosh pulled down his brows because the intensity of his thoughts hurt him.

"Does the ship go to that place?"

"Aye, or near it."

"Then I go with the ship. Let the devil now sleep a little."



Of the rest of that voyage it is written that when he was not flenching or rendering or pulling stroke oar in the whaling gig, Kahdoosh spent his time with the devil, over whom he soon gained a complete control. He made a picture when his big strong hand fitted a needle, and he learned to finger a record as lightly as one would a bubble. His wages loomed very large in his mind during these days, and when he heard from Macgovan that he would have more than enough to buy a large, strong devil with many voices, his cup was full. Now, too, he watched the white men more closely than ever before, picking up more and more English, till at the end of an extended voyage, when he set foot in Dundee and arrayed himself in Scotch tweeds, he was a very different Husky from the one who sat on a flat rock and tortured his soul with thoughts of Peegish and Larpan. Larpan, the son of many fools! But he wanted Peegish more than ever.

It fell on a day when the water was running down a thousand streams of Greenland, that Macgovan's whaler rounded a point on the western coast and headed for an anchorage well known to her master. In the bow stood Kahdoosh, garbed as no Husky had been garbed before in that desolate region. His boots hurt a good deal, but the vivid pattern of his tweeds made up for that. He stood motionless, picking out the topeck of Hadjvick, which was pitched in the same place, and marking diminutive figures that grew slowly larger. No, it was nothing like Dundee or the other ports where he had worked all winter. But it was home—home with the rocks and jar seals and mangy dogs and kayacks dancing on the water—and Peegish. The seed of the North was too deep-rooted in his pagan breast to be destroyed by anything he had seen or done. Thus does the cold hand of the Arctic claim her own.

Peegish was there when he landed in the middle of an awed circle with great good humour and two large bundles. She had, indeed, been fed by her father till the ice moved, but not without protest, since her appetite was hearty. Now she stared at her lover with uncontrollable excitement, and got just one look. That was enough. Larpan, who had developed several new tricks that greatly enhanced his reputation, was also there, a little contemptuous about the Scotch tweeds, but vastly curious as to the bundles. More magic, no doubt, but he felt safe enough. Hadjvick, congratulating

himself that his larder was now to be relieved of a strain, reckoned that the trousers of Kahdoosh would make admirable lamp-wick, and decided that if the wanderer gained the day, he would put that price on the hand of his daughter. Then there were the rest of them, hunters, women and children, all talking at once, fingering the fringe of the strange clothing, the men trying not to show how jealous they were, the women prodigiously impressed, the children staring with round, black eyes. It was a great home-coming.

Followed a little silence, then Kahdoosh dropped into the Husky tongue as smoothly as oil flows into a bottle. He looked at Larpan out of the corner of his eye while he spoke.

"It is known to all that between me and Larpan there is a matter to be settled. It is well that it be settled now, and for this purpose I have come back. But to make that which I will make, it is necessary that I be alone first. Who, then, will lend me his igloo for the space of a short time?"

"I will," said Hadjvick promptly. His was the biggest of all.

Kahdoosh nodded. "It is well."

He picked up his bundles, stalked to the home of Peegish, and retired to solitude. The village waited expectant. Larpan felt a little nervous, admitting that this was a good opening, and contributed the desirable touch of mystery. He did a few tricks in the sight of everybody just to show that he didn't care. But they were old, and missed fire. What was Kahdoosh up to? That was the question. Presently the latter appeared and waved a hand. The village trooped in, silent, wondering. The topeck was exactly as before, nothing touched or altered. Peegish squatted in the front row, with Larpan lounging this time against the back wall. The semicircle formed, black brows, slanting eyes, rows of copper-coloured faces, teeth that glittered, oily hair that fell to the strong shoulders. Kahdoosh took it all in and nodded gravely.

"It is now nearly a year since I went away," he began, "and many strange things have I seen in the land where the whaling ships rest in winter. There are igloos like sand on the shore, built of stone both red and white, and many devils are slaves of the people. Being too impatient to walk, they journey in things like an oomiak which has a roof and runs along the ground more quickly than a coast caribou. There is fire for all, made of stones that



come out of the earth, and water runs where they will in long tubes like a bear's entrails. Plenty of meat there is, also a white food made of a certain powder, which is burned with fire and goes into the stomachs of all. In the night-time they have light in small

"Ey-yeh," said Hadjvick, "what wonders are these? Is Kahdoosh, then, talking of what he dreamed?"

"No," smiled the traveller, "but only of that which I saw and also touched. But of all these devils the most strange



"Larpan began to laugh, while even the faith of Peegish tottered. Kahdoosh did not change a muscle."

bottles, wherein are certain devils who shine very brightly when there is need of them. But the greatest devil of all is one who runs like lightning with a great roaring, following a certain path prepared for him, and pulling behind him more people than there are in many villages."

is the one who takes to himself the voice of those dead or distant, and speaks for them."

This was too much. Larpan began to laugh, while even the faith of Peegish tottered. Kahdoosh did not change a muscle.



"It is truth that I tell, and, furthermore, it is the law that this devil, being very wise, also speaks only the truth. That which he says is believed of all men, and when his word goes forth there is none that answers back. He has a tongue, but no ears; and having no head, yet remembers many things." That devil

stone lamps, and some gear. Kahdoosh marked the shiver, and lifted the door-flap.

"What remains to be said is outside. Sit you close there."

They filed out, squatting within a few feet of the opening. He stepped back, and the flap closed. A little silence. Then came,



"That devil has come here with me. Even now he is in this topeck."

has come here with me. Even now he is in this topeck."

A shiver ran through the audience. They glanced fearfully about. Nothing visible here, no devil, only the utensils of Hadjvick—a pile of greasy skins, two

in a sort of throaty chant, the voice of Kahdoosh.

"I, the devil of all truth, tell of Larpan, who, being in no manner a hunter, but desiring a certain woman, learned for himself some tricks to make his name great in



his village. This man, filling his sleeves with walrus teeth——”

Here the audience sat up very straight, for Kahdoosh, still telling his story, came out, dropped the flap, and sat in the midst of them. But, wonder of wonders, the voice went on inside.

“—filling his sleeves with walrus teeth, and burying the skull of a jar seal in the ground, brought forth these things, pretending that”—here Peegish screamed and Larpin’s eyes bulged—“that he was a magician. Fools there were in the village that believed him, so he sat up with his fingers at night, making them smooth for more tricks. But because his mind was empty like a pool in which there are no fish, and his head soft like a child’s, and his arm weak like that of an old woman, it came that the tribe grew weary of his foolishness,

and the woman he desired laughed in his face and married another.”

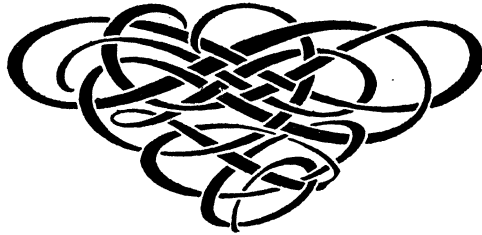
With that the voice ceased, making a little noise like a dog does when it scratches the ice.

“Ou-uh !” breathed the audience. “Ou-uh !” Here, indeed, was magic surpassing the wildest dream. They looked at Larpan for his answer.

He got up shakily, glared at Kahdoosh, seemed about to speak, then, marching stolidly to his own topeck, went in and drew the flap tight.

The village watched him silently, but the father of Peegish wasted no thought on Larpan. He leaned over and spoke into the hollow of his daughter’s ear :

“If the trousers of your husband please you not, I am in great need of lamp-wick.”



## ON THE DEVON COAST.

**O**VER the Channel at dawn, like hill-chains snowy-crested,  
 Floated the clouds silver-tipt by the sun;  
 Light fell on Devon, and still to her beauty hard-breasted  
 Loudly the breakers run.

Daylight is dead, and the far-away sea-line, where France is,  
 Stirs like a snake, endless coil upon coil;  
 Here are the warrior waves that with salt silver lances  
 Fall on the rocks that foil.

Blindly the breaker runs into the cavern and quarries,  
 A blade to the crevice, a hammer to smite;  
 The moon, like a sickle awaiting some reaper that tarries,  
 Glows on the field of night.

None hears the cry of the sea like that silver cloud-haunter;  
 None like the moon sees the smoke of her spray  
 Rising where Devon runs into the sand-drift to daunt her  
 Over her moon-led way.

WILFRID THORLEY.





PROOF POSITIVE.

SHE: Can you tell me the time, please?

HE: I don't know exactly, but I know it isn't four o'clock yet.

SHE: Are you sure?

HE: Quite, 'cause I have to be home by four, and I'm not home yet!

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### THE GERANIUMS.

*By Ernest Bramah.*

IRENE let me in for it, of course. Still, it would have been ungracious to chide her in the circumstances.

"I promised Mrs. Capping that you would attend to the garden while we were here," she explained to me when we were irrevocably installed in the furnished house. "She asked me if you understood the treatment of geraniums, and I said 'Of course.'"

"Of course," I said also.

"You do, don't you?" demanded Irene, with a flash of unworthy doubt.

"In a certain sense I do," I replied guardedly. "Still, we must remember that there are many varieties of this prolific esculent, some of which are new to horticulture since my old geraniuming days."

Irene was obviously impressed.

"Well, here they are," she said, stopping at a bed. "What kind are these?"

I don't admit that I could have absolutely made a mistake as to their identity, because it was the only bed the garden possessed, and the

garden itself is only in the nature of a full-sized billiard table. But, frankly, up to that moment I had been thinking of asparagus. I had to readjust my whole line of ideas. I looked at the geraniums, and Irene continued to look at me.

"Well?"

"These," I said, when I had privately satisfied myself that the labels to which I was accustomed had been thoughtlessly removed, "these, Irene, are—er—pink geraniums."

I don't pretend to understand the depths of Irene's nature fully yet, although we have been married several months. Sometimes she prattles consecutively, at others she is strangely silent, and occasionally she develops a curious irrelevance.

"Suppose we go and look at the kitchen sink," was her next remark.

The following day I secretly bought a hand-book on gardening. I knew by instinct—the primeval woodcraft of generations of arboreal ancestors breaking through the thin veneer of suburban artificiality—that some day the geraniums would require watering. For the



more exact details I relied on my handbook. And this is what it told me :—

*"Geraniums, Watering.*—Watering plays no inconsiderable part in the successful culture of geraniums, nor is there any detail of their treatment in which the beginner is more liable to go wrong and perhaps by a single error destroy the fair promise of months. Hard and fast rules cannot be given, as the time of the year, the state of the weather, the varying

book back. I decided to water the geraniums, and, in fact, spent the greater part of the evening directing Irene how to use the can. We had just finished, when a shower drove us in, and for the remainder of the night it poured.

Two days later Irene called my attention to a curious phenomenon. All the lower leaves of the geraniums had turned yellow. Irene stood by in that attitude of faithful expectancy that I was beginning to regret. That is the worst

of knowing everything: you are called on to explain so much.

"This is very interesting," I remarked. "Mrs. Capping is evidently in the very forefront of the geranium movement. Here we have one of the present season's most striking novelties. . . ." At this point I unfortunately touched one of the leaves. It fell off. Irene touched another. It did the same.

The gardening book has an excellent index, and I had no difficulty in finding—I won't exactly say in finding what I wanted, but in finding the following reference :—

*"Yellow, Leaves of Geraniums Turning* — This frequently indicates an excess of moisture at the roots of the plants. Should it arise from this cause, immediate steps should be taken to remedy the fault. On the other hand, the geraniums may be suffering from insufficient liquid nourishment. A little experience. . . ."

On the way to the station there is a small greenhouse which appears to constitute the business premises of John H. Nukes. Mr. Nukes is generally about the place, and he has the outward manner of being a friendly man. We exchanged nods this morning, and on my way back, an hour ago, I stopped to comment on the weather. Somehow the conversation got round to geraniums.

"The difficulty I find," I remarked in my best Covent Garden expert manner, "is that I am unable to gather from books just when to water the plants and exactly how much wa—I mean aqueous nutriment, to give."

He smiled, under the impression, I believe, that I was a humorist. Then he became serious.

"You can't learn that from books," he said, "because those that write them don't know."



THE SERVANT PROBLEM AGAIN.

MISTRESS: Y'know, Mary, I could do the work of the house myself in the time it takes me to tell you how to do it.

MAID: Well, mum, in the time it takes me to listen to you, so could I!

conditions of plant life, have all to be taken into account. A little experience will soon teach the careful gardener what course to adopt, and as a golden rule we would observe that it is better to err on the side of restraint than of excess, whether the question involved is that of using the hose-pipe or of withholding it."

Of course, it was then too late to take the

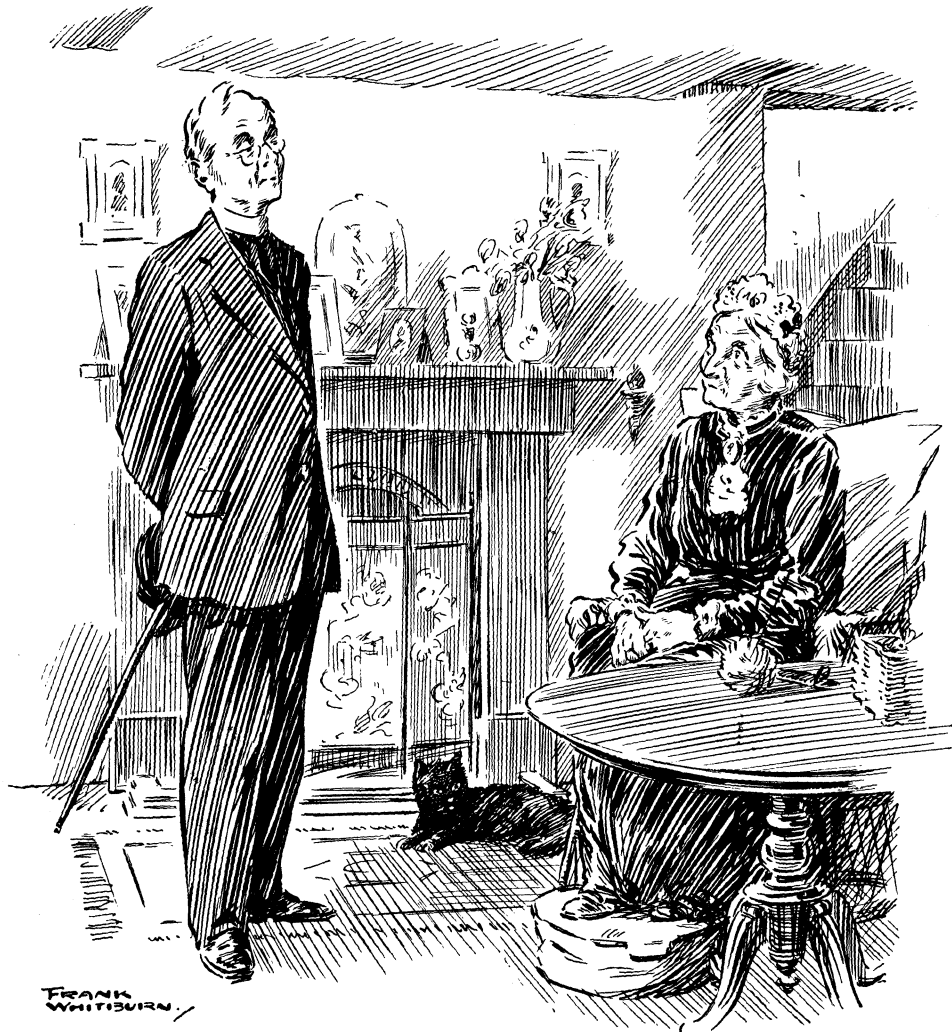


"That's a difficulty that doesn't trouble you, I imagine, eh?" I ventured. I wondered if I was becoming perhaps *too* friendly, but I was also getting desperate.

This time he smiled quite naturally. "Well, I introduced 'Mrs. O. K. Barling' to the trade. I think that ought to be enough."

I agreed supinely, although even then it did

At this sudden counter-stroke I broke into a cold perspiration. If I confessed absolute ignorance, it might get round to Mrs. Capping. Irene would then hear of it, and upbraid me with duplicity. And then, by a wonderful inspiration, I seemed to remember having heard of mulch cows. Probably mulching was a sort of botanical inoculation. I struck boldly out.



## LUMINOUS.

VICAR (relating village news to invalid parishioner): The doctor was presented with an illuminated address last night, Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown: Ah, 'twill be a handy thing to have outside his gate on dark nights, sir!

not seem quite good taste for the man to turn the conversation to his social exploits.

"But about geraniums," I persisted, "how often should you say that I ought to water them?"

"Do they happen to be mulched?" he demanded.

"They have been," I replied, meeting his eye steadily, "but it didn't take."

"Well, then," he advised thoughtfully, "I should let them have a nice drop of water now and then."

"About a . . . ?" I prompted.

"A goodish drench," he nodded.



"Every . . . ?"

"About every so often."

"In fact," I suggested darkly, "just as much as they require whenever they want it?"

"That's it," he agreed, with the pleased look of one whose exact meaning is grasped. "Not too much and not too little."

"A few canfuls?" I hazarded.

"About that—more or less."

"To how many plants?"

"You might say to a fairish breadth of ground."

"Look here," I said, "let us get the matter

#### FASHIONS IN FLOWERS.

ACCORDING to an article in a ladies' paper, the fashions for wearing flowers change as the fashions in gowns change, and these are the latest ideas: To wear a single rose just below the right ear; to pin a single orchid on the shoulder of an evening gown, and to fasten a bouquet of lilies of the valley on the left hip while serving tea.

A few other modes which might occur at any moment are: Balancing a tulip on the chin while shopping; wearing a carnation at the back of the neck at the theatre; fastening



BETTER THAN NOTHING.

CUSTOMER: You promised to have those circulars done for me yesterday, and you haven't even started them yet?

PRINTER: My dear sir, we've been so busy in these works that you ought to be thankful we took the time to make you a promise!

absolutely cut and dried. You would recommend, for a medium-sized bed of average-grown plants set at proportionate distances, an adequate amount of watersupplied at necessary intervals?"

He nodded sympathetic agreement. "You can't go far wrong at that," he said.

I don't intend to. I haven't mentioned it to Irene yet, but John H. Nukes is coming to-morrow to water the geraniums, and he will continue to do so as often as they require it until Mrs. Capping returns. That, I suspect, is largely in the nature of his snug suburban business.

forget-me-nots on the right elbow for bridge, and decorating the eyebrows with mustard and cress for dinner-parties.



SMALL GIRL (to mother, who is busy making gauze wings for her little daughter's fairy dress): When you get to Heaven, Mummie, won't you be useful!

MOTHER: How, darling?

SMALL GIRL: Helping to make wings for the angels.



## THE ACROSTIC.

*By Theta.*

THOMAS is a man who dotes upon intellectual pursuits, whether they take the form of limericks or those quaint little designs which illustrate White's intention of mating in two moves.

When, therefore, I found him with ruffled hair, an unlit cigar, and other symptoms of mental concentration, I was not surprised. On the contrary, I merely asked :

"What is it this time?"

For answer he handed me a newspaper cutting on which I read the following:—

In almost every land  
Found in childhood's  
hand.

1. High capital, where  
met in state  
A council of importance  
great.

2. E'en though my name  
should vanish from  
the map,

Men will recall it when  
good wine's on tap.

3. The doctor's helper,  
who, it must be said,  
Has here (alas!) com-  
pletely lost his head.

"Verse three," I said, when I had finished reading, "has a touch of realism, but, on the whole, the poem seems too deeply tinged with mysticism."

"It's not a poem," he explained impatiently. "It's an acrostic. I suppose you know what that is."

"Fully," I admitted, "but don't let that stop you explaining, if you wish to." And he didn't. His wife, at any rate, was an interested listener.

"How thrilling!" she exclaimed, when the toils of a long explanation were o'er. "And what's the solution of this one?"

It appeared that I had arrived just in time to help in finding this. So far, he had not got beyond the fact that the three "lights" limited the uprights to six letters between them.

"All one word?" the lady queried.

"Not necessarily," he said. "Now, what is found in childhood's hand?"

"Baby likes the puppy's tail," she remarked brightly to me, and we drifted off into a discussion whose only connection with acrostics lay in the mysterious nature of a little che-ild's mind. But Thomas soon recalled us to the realities of life by

frenzied demands for some of the better-known councils.

"Urban District, Rural District and County," was his wife's suggestion, which, however, caused no enthusiasm.

"What about the Council of Trent?" I asked. "Trent is a capital, and, being in the Tyrol, one assumes it is high."

"How clever of you!" said Mrs. Thomas. "Now do the second light for him."



A POINT OF PRONUNCIATION.

SOLE PASSENGER: Your 'bus is light this morning.

COCKNEY CONDUCTOR: Yus! But only 'alf a minute, sir.

"I saw that at once," he announced proudly. "Oporto. Port wine's named after it."

"Just like baby after Uncle William," was the comment, and the lady attempted to renew our discussion on the only thing that really interests her. But Thomas was now hot on the scent, and would persist in giving tongue.

"That gives us T and O as the first two letters," he began.

"Toy" as a trio was the obvious result,



in view of the fact that it was something found in childhood's hand.

"And," Thomas went on, "T and O also as the first two finals."

"Top," said Mrs. Thomas at once. "Baby loves. . . ." But Thomas was now in clamorous pursuit of light three.

"All we want," he shouted, "is a word beginning with Y and ending with P!"

"Or the other way round," I said. "Toy need not necessarily come before top."

"True," he agreed, and added, "Of course, in acrostic parlance 'lost his head' probably means that the first letter is dropped."

made me for a moment think I really was the humorist I had once hoped.

"You must show it to him," she said, and very reluctantly her spouse produced the acrostic column of his favourite paper. I give it in full.

#### SOLUTION TO ACROSTIC 176.

1. Pandemonium (a).

2. Rhine (b).

3. (d) IspenseR.

(a) See "Paradise Lost," Book 1, line 756.

(b) "The good Rhine wine."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—"Alpha."

—Full marks allotted for Acrostic 174. "Beta."

—What authority have you for saying that



#### A PLUNGE FOR IMPROVEMENT.

PUPIL: Please, sir, I ain't got no pencil.

MASTER: What?

PUPIL: Please, I k'ain't got no pencil.

There is no need to record our various conceptions of a doctor's helper. They had ranged from epidemics to valetudinarians, before we finally decided that apothecary without his head satisfied the acrostic and (with his head) helped the doctor by making up his prescriptions.

In its final form, as written out for despatch to the Acrostic Editor, it read:—

1. Trent

2. OportO.

3. (a) PothecarY.

I am not very keen on acrostics, and it was the merest chance that made me mention this one again on my next visit. But the laughter with which Mrs. Thomas greeted the question

Pennsylvania is in North Wales? "Gamma."—Your claim allowed.

"The gentleman believes in work rather than play," I said. "Earnest fellow."



THE scene was the deserted coffee-room of a country hotel, where a single guest had been waiting a very long time for someone to answer the bell. At last the one waiter of the place entered and asked respectfully—

"Did you ring the bell, sir?"

"No," replied the visitor, "I was tolling it: I thought you were dead."





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## THE UP-TO-DATE DOMESTIC.

(Written after reading the report of the Commission on Domestic Service.)

**We've just engaged a servant on the very latest plan:**

**We call her Miss de Smithers and not merely Mary Ann.**

**In her uniform so dainty—well, she really looks immense,**

**It's orchid-coloured chiffon, and it's all at our expense.**

**The kitchen's decorated in a most artistic way—**

**We've put the grand piano there in case she wants to play.**

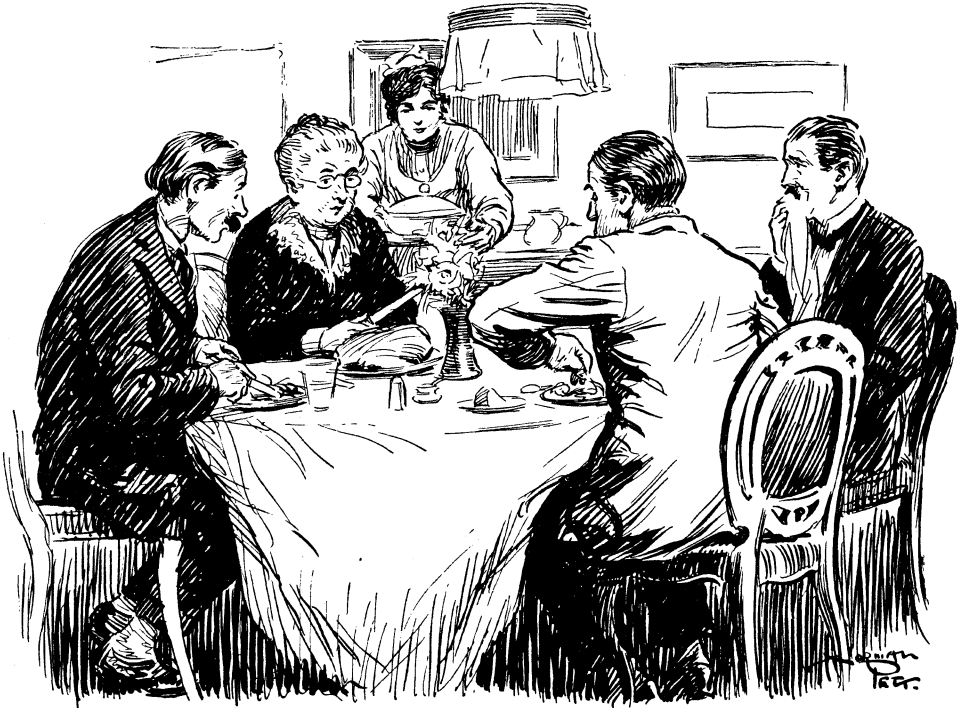
**There's a wireless apparatus, and the books that she loves best,**

**And a chesterfield with cushions when she feels she wants a rest.**

## THE WIRELESS WORRIER.

GEORGE has only got a crystal set at present, thank goodness, but, even so, the way he jiggers about with it passes belief. I tremble to think what life in his immediate vicinity will be like when he gets the valves he is hankering after.

Just as you are getting interested in the news and the weather, he snatches the 'phones from your head and says: "Excuse me, old man, you've got the wrong pair; you'll find these much better. How's that? Worse! Oh, then you had the right ones, after all. Better change over again." Interval of three minutes. "Can you hear all right?" "Splendidly." "Well, perhaps I'd better give you a fresh spot on the crystal. That better?" A foxtrot starts and comes to a sudden and unexpected end.



HARD LUCK!

**SENTIMENTAL LADY:** It's hard to think that this poor little lamb should be destroyed in its youth just to cater for our appetites!

**SMART BOARDER** (struggling with his portion): Yes, it's a bit tough!

**We let her off each evening, for we like to see her gay,  
And she goes to lots of dances and the pictures or a play.**

**The place is always spick and span, she never breaks a cup,**

**For mother does the housework still, and father washes up.**

*R. H. Roberts.*



It is stated that twenty-five million pounds is spent on birdseed in Great Britain every year. The only way to cut down this expense is to give up the canary and buy a motor-car.

"Hear anything now?" "Not a sound."  
"Good! I've just cut you off to see if the switch is working properly."

George can keep up this nerve-racking performance for the entire evening, and then has the assurance to remark: "Well, it's nice to be able to give your friends a bit of pleasure with a little thing like this!"

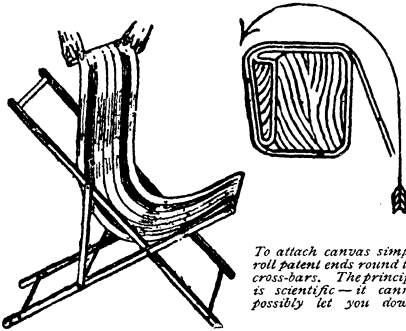


"THIS season's new hops will be splendid," writes an agricultural expert. On reading this Aunt Jane remarked that she much preferred the old-fashioned dances.



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LEAVING IT TO ERMYNTRUDE.

By Ada Leonora Harris.

"I've had a letter from Aunt Julia," said Vera, as she poured me out a second cup of tea. "She would like to run in and have a look at us, so she says."

"Well," I replied cordially, "I shall be glad to see her. Aunt Julia's a jolly good sort."

"I'll ask her to tea and supper on Thursday," Vera continued. "And as Auntie is very fond of boiled beef——"

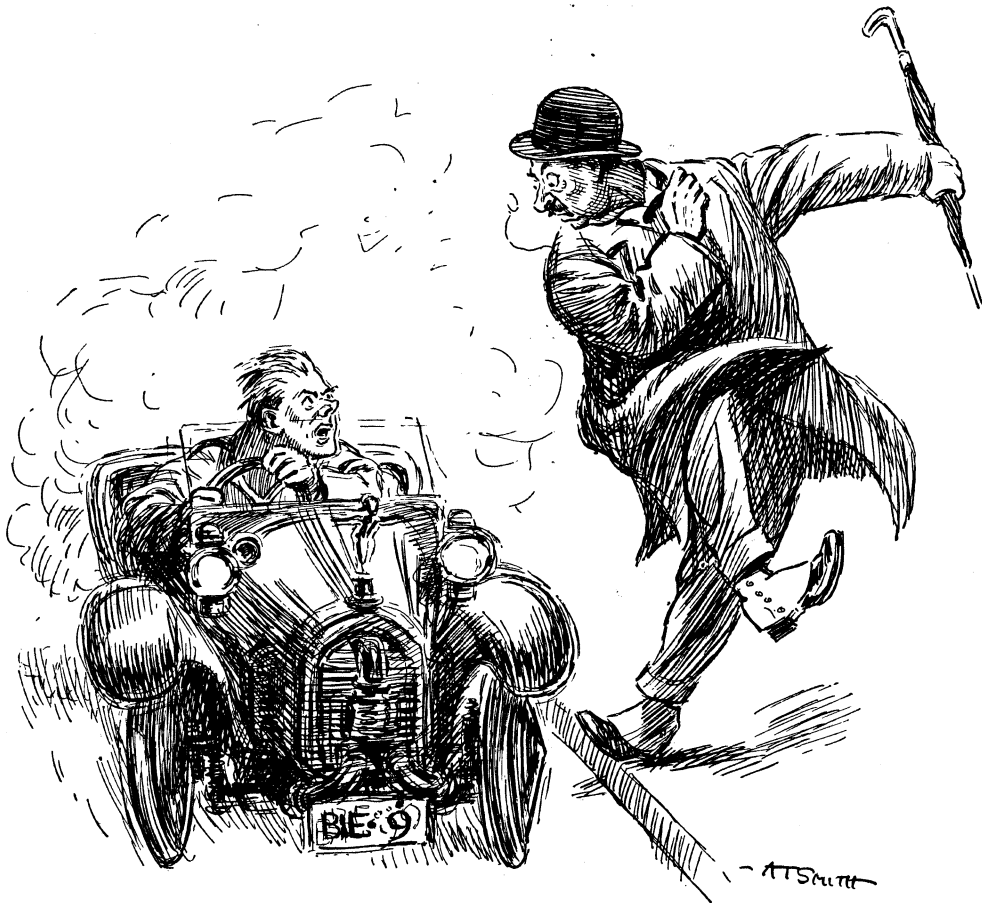
Just then a door banged, and a brilliant

a little vivid, isn't it? I hope she isn't going anywhere where there are cows."

Ermyntrude, having been sounded on the subject of boiled beef, declared that she could cook it a treat.

"Just you leave it to me, and I'll have it as tender as tender, and looking nice and pink, not the drab-looking stuff you see sometimes, all along of being galloped, instead of cooked slow and steady like it ought."

So Vera left it to her; and when the joint came to table at supper-time on the day of



THE POINT OF VIEW.

INDIGNANT LIGHT-CAR ENTHUSIAST: Why on earth can't you look where you're going? You nearly trod on my car!

figure, issuing from the side entrance, flashed out of the gate.

"Who on earth——" I began.

"Why, that's Ermyntrude," giggled Vera. "Didn't you recognise her?"

You see, we had recently been lucky enough to secure a maid—not a bad sort, and one who could cook a bit, but one who was also rather a loud dresser.

"What's that hectic garment she's got on now?" I inquired.

"That's a jumper," answered Vera. "It is

Aunt Julia's visit, I must say its appearance did Ermyntrude credit.

Aunt Julia, who is a widow without chick or child, comfortably off, and living in rooms at the West End, was most complimentary.

I looked at Ermyntrude, who was present, expecting to see her blushing with pride as deeply as the beef. But, to my surprise, she looked scared.

I carved Aunt Julia a generous plateful, and later on a second.

"Best bit of boiled beef I've tasted for a long



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This is best done in a very simple way, by merely applying mercolized wax at night, like cold cream, and washing it off in the morning. It absorbs the disfiguring cuticle gradually and harmlessly, leaving a brilliant natural complexion. Of course, this also takes with it all such facial blemishes as red blotches, tan, moth patches, sallowness, liver spots, etc.

The new skin is usually several degrees lighter, and finer in texture.

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Women annoyed with disfiguring growths of superfluous hair wish to know not merely how to temporarily remove the hair, but how to kill the roots permanently. For this purpose pure-powdered pheminol may be applied directly to the objectionable hair growth. The recommended treatment is designed not only to instantly remove the hair but also to actually kill the roots so that the growth will not return. About an ounce of pheminol should be sufficient.

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Soaps and artificial shampoos ruin many beautiful heads of hair. Few people know that a teaspoonful of good stallax dissolved in a cup of hot water has a natural affinity for the hair and makes the most delightful shampoo imaginable. It leaves the hair brilliant, soft and wavy, cleanses the scalp completely and greatly stimulates the hair growth. The only drawback is that stallax seems rather expensive. It comes to the chemist only in sealed  $\frac{1}{4}$ -lb. packages. However, this is sufficient for twenty-five or thirty shampoos, and it really works out very cheaply in the end.

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time," were her last words as I saw her off at the station.

That beef lasted us two or three days, and even then I was sorry to see the last of it, and said so.

Ermyntrude was just leaving the room as I made this remark, and turned back.

"Well, I ain't," she exclaimed. "For it's worried me. You see, I b'iled it in the same saucepan what I dyed my jumper in—dyed it rose-pink. I dessay you've noticed me wearing it. Suits me a treat. I had meant to scour the saucepan afterwards; but I clean forgot, and it never entered my mind until I came to dish up the beef, and then it was too late, and I thought I'd best leave it be and say nothink. But I was that nervous you wouldn't believe,

I glanced round whilst fumbling for my old briar, but what I saw caused me to stay my hand. The coach was a non-corridor and the compartment a non-smoker. In the far corner sat a female. She wore strong, flat-heeled shoes which she very possibly called sensible; her nondescript tweed costume might equally well be termed serviceable; her hat was a challenge to wind and rain. But her expression was still more formidable. It would have done justice to the most militant of militant suffragettes.

Rob and I exchanged questioning glances. It was enough: neither dared ask for permission to smoke.

"How far to the next stop?" queried Rob.

"Roefield—two hours," I replied.



EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

ATTENDANT: This is the room where the Duke was assassinated.

VISITOR: Indeed! Why, last year you showed us another room.

ATTENDANT: Quite right, sir, so we did, but that room is being repaired now.

not knowing but what I'd poisoned the lot of you—and that lady praising the colour of it, as well she might!

"My!" she added, with a wide smile, "I was glad when you didn't seem none the worse for it. All the same, I never touched it meself!"



#### "ON THE OTHER FOOT."

THE train was late, or Rob and I should have missed it. As it was, we dived into the last coach amid cries of "Stand clear, there!" After four hours of laboratory odours, a hasty lunch, and a mad rush for the train, our dearest wish was for a quiet smoke.

*Facing Third Cover.]*

Rob shrugged his shoulders, and we relapsed into silence.

I think I must have slept, for suddenly I became conscious that our travelling companion was folding up packages and putting them into an attaché case. Then she stood up, flicked a few stray crumbs from her serviceable attire, and replaced the case on the rack.

I glanced at my watch. Sure enough, our patience would be rewarded in half an hour. My fingers strayed fondly over the smooth bowl of my pipe. The lady still fumbled with her belongings—she was speaking.

I turned sharply round and in my bravest voice asked: "Did you speak, madam?"

"I did," was the curt reply. "I asked if you objected to smoking."

*E. Spencer.*



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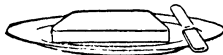
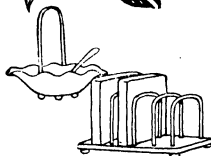
*W. P. Hartley*



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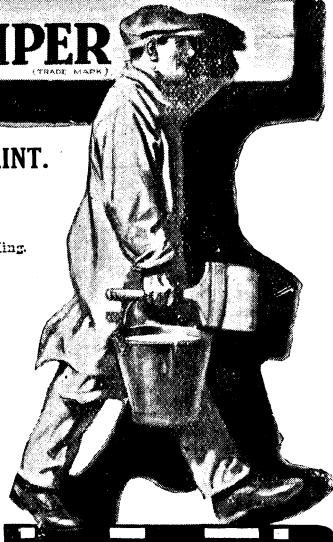
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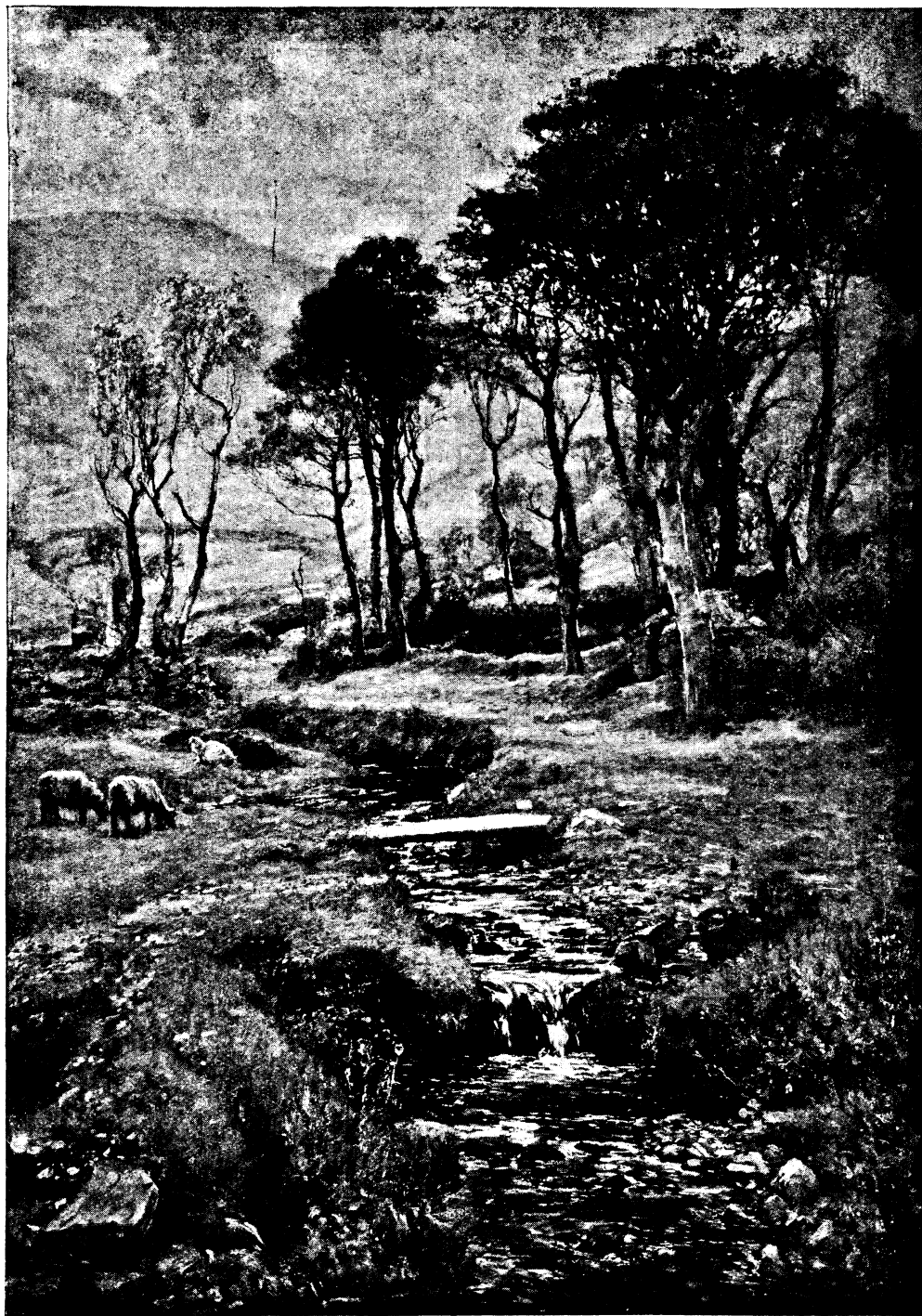
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A SUNLIT GLEN. BY YEEND KING.

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"Presently The Master turned and, picking up his own letter, added that to the pyre."

# SHORN LAMBS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*And Five Were Foolish*," "*Valerie French*," "*Berry and Co.*,"  
"*Jonah and Co.*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"O H, Simon dear," said Patricia, "why aren't you rich?"

"If it comes to that," said Simon ruefully, "why are you poor? You've less excuse than I have. At least your mother was an American."

"Yes, but she married for love—and got cut off for it. Which is why her poor little girl must marry money."

Simon Beaulieu regarded the firmament. This was arrayed in black and silver. There was no moon: only the countless stars at all lightened the darkness, their dim, peculiar radiance turning the countryside into a kingdom of dreams. As though to indorse such witchcraft, the strains of a distant valse stole in and out of earshot, rising and falling into the trough of Silence, intoning

a lovesick litany and rendering exquisitely the mystery of the hour. The air was magically still and quick with the sweet perfume of new-mown hay. Midsummer Night had come to Castle Breathless in all her glory.

"You know," said Simon, extracting a cigarette, "I daresay it's just as well. We think we're suited, but we probably aren't. If we joined up, we should probably scrap like hell."

"I doubt it," said Patricia, slipping a bare arm through his. "You've got your faults, of course: and so have I. But they're—they're quite bearable, Simon."

"It isn't a question of faults," said Simon slowly. "I love your faults, Pat. . . . It's a question of temperament. You know."

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Everything in the garden looks lovely—so long as you're outside. If we got in, it might be a very different shout. Supposing you didn't like the colour of my vests."

"I'm sure I should," said Patricia solemnly. "And if I didn't, they could easily be dyed."

"Yes, but I shouldn't want them dyed. You see? You'd say you couldn't stick them, and I should retort that I had to wear the swine, an' before we knew where we were we should be in over our knees."

Patricia Bohun frowned.

"What colour are they?" she demanded.

"A warm biscuit," said Simon.

"You must look maddening," said Patricia. "And I like biscuit very much. So you see it's all nonsense to say we shouldn't get on."

"Yes, I knew that was coming," said Simon. "That was easy. But you know what I mean, Pat. Life's rather like a film, and a friendship like ours is like a jolly good act. But marriage is a 'close-up.' Well, I don't say ours wouldn't 've come off: but there are plenty that don't."

"D'you honestly think that our marriage would have been less successful than those we propose to make?"

"I don't propose——"

"Yes, you do. Simon, you can't let me down. You're going to marry Estelle."

"I can't bear it," said Simon. "She's so—so fidgety. Always chucking herself about. You're so calm, Pat. . . . Besides, she wouldn't look at me."

"Well, she's looked at you pretty hard for the last twelve months," said Patricia sagely. "Besides, you can but try. If she says 'No,' well, then, you've done your bit. But it'd make it easier for me. I'd like to feel we were both in the same old boat. I know I've got your love, but then I'd have your understanding too. I'd feel you knew what it meant. I don't want you to be unhappy, Simon dear: but I think you'd be less unhappy if you were married. And—and it'd be putting two hedges between us, instead of only one. . . . You see, when I marry George—as I suppose I shall: we're supping together, and you know what that means. . . . Well, when I marry George, that won't wash you out. I'll be bound to think of you. And if I think of you single, unmarried—*available*, Simon, it'll be ten times as hard to chase you out of my mind. And I want to play the game. One may have to marry for money, but at least one can honour one's bond. . . . And I think, perhaps, it'd

be the same for you. You *needn't* marry money, because you're a man: but three hundred a year isn't much, and it's growing less. And in these days . . . Well, Estelle's got fifteen thousand. Besides, she's awfully nice. And if you were married, you'd have a game to play. D'you see, Simon?"

"Yes," said Simon Beaulieu. "You mean that in love, as in everything else in the world, the positive's easier to deal with than the negative. Better a Dead Sea apple than only forbidden fruit."

"And you say we shouldn't get on!" said Patricia deliberately.

There was a silence.

Shoulder to shoulder, the two stood still as statuary, looking into the night. For such an exercise their coign of vantage was superb. The balustrade before them severed the gardens from the park. This for the most part was walled with rising woods, but here the ground fell sharply into a valley which ran like a giant gutter, straight and clean, to the jaws of Peering Gap. Such was the darkness that the gap was not to be seen, but a starlit scallop of sky showed where it lay.

At length—

"We mightn't," said Simon doggedly.

"I mightn't get on with George. Or you with Estelle."

"You won't," said Simon Beaulieu. "Neither shall I. There won't be any question of getting on. Our respective unions will be marriages of convenience, business deals. They'll proceed mechanically, like a couple of cars. Now and again some slight adjustment'll be made, but, in the ordinary way, so long as they're watered and fed, they'll go right on. The chauffeur'll do his bit and the car'll do hers. No understanding will be necessary—there'll be nothing to understand. If you stick to your book of instructions, it's a fool-proof show. But ours—our marriage would have been like a man on a horse, journeying over the world day in day out, sharing fair weather and foul and getting to know each other inside out. Well, they get on or they don't—a man and his horse. It's a question of temperament. And there ain't no book of the rules for dealin' with temperaments."

Patricia laid her head against Simon's shoulder.

"Yes, there is, dear," she said. "I've studied yours so often. You carry it in your eyes. I wonder if Estelle will be able



to read it. I don't think so. And mine. . . Haven't you ever read mine ? ”

“ Pat,” said Simon gently, “ don't make things worse. We agreed to wash Sentiment out.”

“ I know, I know. But don't say we shouldn't get on. Leave me my pretty dream.”

“ All right, lady. I—I daresay we should. But you never can tell,” he added, “ and I don't know that dreams aren't rather dangerous things.”

“ D'you mean that I mustn't dwell on what might have been ? ”

“ I think you should try not to. I mean, it's unsettling. After all, we're not madly in love. I don't stop breathing when you go out of the room, and you don't come over queer when I come in.”

“ I feel all pleased, Simon.”

“ That's more fellow-feeling than love. I'm a congenial soul. We've fitted in very well, and that's as much as you can say. We don't give up things for one another. I haven't pawned my boots to buy you a wrist-watch or soaked in money on flowerets. When I've given you dinner——”

“ I've chosen the place and the play. And you always give me melon because I like it so. And why have you asked me so many, many times ? ”

“ To please myself. You're a congenial soul.”

Patricia turned and lifted a beautiful leg.

“ Can you see ? ” she demanded, pointing.

“ I see your ankle, Pat, and your little foot.”

The girl leaned back against the stone balustrade.

“ I dress to please you,” she said. “ Even to-night. I put on black stockings to-night, when I might have worn gold. I like gold better and I'd've been more in the mode. But you like me in black stockings, Simon, and so I put them on. . . . I may be only congenial. I hope to God I am. You'll get off lighter then. But. . . Well, Simon, it's pretty obvious that I love you.”

The man's arms were about her, and his cheek pressed tight against hers.

“ Pat, Pat, my precious, you know I've been covering up. You know I'm mad about you and always have been. And you know that whatever happens there'll never be any one else as long as I live.”

He breathed the words rather than spoke them. His tone, touch, frame were vibrant as any wire.

The girl slid her arms round his neck and held him close.

“ I know,” she whispered.

Caress and word seemed to relieve the strain. The man relaxed sensibly. After a moment's silence he turned and kissed her mouth.

“ I blame myself,” he said quietly enough. “ I'm older than you, and I shouldn't have let it go on. I know we'd an understanding—a blessed, faithful agreement, faithfully kept. There never was, I believe, such natural sympathy. But these things bank up, Pat : and, if we weren't to marry, we should never have been engaged. . . . It was defying Nature. In a way it was our affair, but it was out of joint. It's been—perfect. . . . But it was out of joint. Well, now that dislocation has got to be reduced. Very good. We knew it must come. Our eyes were open. That was the basis of our understanding—that sooner or later it must end. But I think we forgot—the adhesions . . . the seals that Nature sets upon things that are out of joint. They take some breaking—adhesions. . . . And—they've—got to be broken—to-night.” With a sharp sob Patricia drew in her breath : then she let it go pelting and drooped her head. “ We've played about so far. You know we have. Fainting, ducking, side-stepping, covering up. Well, now we've got to mix it and knock Things out.”

The girl clung to him desperately.

“ Oh, Simon, I can't, I can't. Not all at once like this. I know they've got to be broken, but they needn't be torn. Just once or twice we can be alone again. I shan't be married at once. Let's break them gradually, darling. Then I'll have something to look for—to buoy me up to-night. Life looks so terribly dark, Simon. Let me have just a ray of light. Just once or twice—that's all. You know. Just a word and a kiss. Don't smash my world to-night. Even the torturers, Simon, never did things like that. They worked by degrees—gradually, so that the torture could be borne.”

The man smiled into her eyes.

As a moment ago her touch had soothed him, so now her weakness seemed to have made him strong.

“ Pat, this isn't like you. We must keep troth. If we didn't end it to-night and go down smiling, we should spoil everything. Together we planted the prettiest little flower : and it's grown so lovely, Pat, and smelled so very sweet : and now—it's time



to pick it . . . Well, we must pick it properly—not drag it up piecemeal. And then—for ever, think what a memory we'll have—that we weren't afraid to pick our pretty flower . . . when it was in full bloom. We'll be so proud and happy to remember that. It won't have faded or died. It'll 've been just perfect—all the time. . . . And we must pick it smiling, Pat—just for each other's sake."

"Oh, Simon, Simon, I shall break. It's like Death. I can't face it."

"You can with me. We can face anything. What's death to us, so long as we go out well?"

Patricia lifted her head.

"You're right," she said quietly. "We— we must go out well." For a moment her eyes wandered over the heaven. Then they returned to his. She put up a little hand and touched his hair, setting it back from his temples and patting it as she pleased. Then she smiled very tenderly. "Let's pick our flower now, darling."

The man smiled back.

For a minute they kissed and clung—while the world rocked. . . . Then he loosened his hold, and she fell away.

He picked up her hand and kissed her finger-tips.

"My beautiful darling," he said. "My sweet, my sweet."

Then he leaned back against the stone-work and took out a cigarette.

For a moment he fingered this, smiling thoughtfully.

Then he looked up.

"Pat," he said, "what about a glass of champagne? Between you and me, I think we've earned it."

"My dear," said Patricia Bohun, "your brain's in your head." They started to stroll towards the mansion. "By the way, did I tell you to back Grey Ruby for the Stewards' Cup?"

"Who gave you that?" said Beaulieu.

"No one," said Patricia. "I dreamed it. I dreamed I saw the posters—STEWARDS' CUP RESULT. I was wondering what had won when I woke to see Belinda with my letters and tea. The first letter I opened was from a girl called Ruby Grey."

Simon grunted.

"I should have a bit on *sans doute*," he said lightly. "But these 'ere indications are treacherous things. Look at poor Barley Macfinn. Two nights before the St. Leger he dreamed he was giving bananas to a baboon: and as fast as he gave them the

brute kept shaking its head and slinging them back. Well, Barley woke up and rushed off and put his binder on Monkey Nut . . . Well, I don't know where Monkey Nut finished, but a horse called Peelam won. Barley couldn't see it for weeks."

Patricia laughed gaily.

"You're not a bit like your namesake, Simon," she said. "He would have plunged. And yet . . ."

"Yet what?"

"In a way you are. I mean . . . Never mind. I'll leave it there. What's this they're playing?"

Conversing evenly, they came to the flagged walk and the windows belching ragtime and blazing lights.

By one consent they turned and looked back into the night.

Then they passed up the steps and joined the carnival.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let who will throw a stone at Patricia Bohun.

She certainly promised to marry a man whom she did not love. But if George Persimmon believed that such a lady would consent to bear his name for any earthly or heavenly reason other than to share his riches, then he deserved to be confined. But George was no fool. You may take it from me, Sirs, she did her neighbour no wrong. Whether a woman should sell herself is another matter. From the age of twelve Patricia had been schooled—cleverly schooled to take that unpleasant fence. Her aunt, Lady Coblow of Breathless, had not only shown her that she must marry money, but had taken care to surround her with the paraphernalia of wealth. From the age of twelve Patricia had lived and lain soft. Footmen, tiled bathrooms, French cooking, sables, limousines helped to create the atmosphere in which she moved. Use of that sort holds hard. By the time she was twenty-two she had come to regard the idea of parting with Luxury much as she looked upon that of committing suicide—a step taken only by the temporarily insane.

That Beaulieu's outlook was different is natural enough.

He had no patron to pave his path with gold, and it was all he could do to keep his head above water. The man had gone hungry. Had he stepped out of his world, he might have waxed fat and kicked. But that would have meant leaving every friend that he had—including Patricia Bohun.



He worked hard, driving a promising pen, but the promise was shadowy stuff, and his earnings were fitful and slight. It follows that while he perceived the extreme desirability of riches, he knew that they were not essential to life and more than suspected that happiness could be found without them.

Marriage itself Patricia and Simon viewed in much the same light. Wedlock for them was an earthy business, the Solemnization of Matrimony differing but a little from the conveyance of land. In the actual service they saw a fine old tradition well worth preserving in these degenerate days. Had they been bidden to witness a Livery of Seisin they would have gone in the same spirit. I do not know that I blame them. Few of the unions with which they were brought in contact were made in heaven; some were patently home-made; many were fearfully and wonderfully made; while one and all were discussed as worldly engagements the letter of which should not be flagrantly dishonoured. To them the plighting of troth was a common or garden contract and nothing more. It is to their credit that it was nothing less. What lifted them out of the ruck was that to their way of thinking all common or garden contracts were sacred things. Their word once passed must be religiously kept. With the letter they were not concerned; the spirit was the thing. The game *had* to be played.

Simon did not ask Estelle to become his wife. Had she asked him, he would, I believe, have consented to become her husband. But then, somehow, the doctrine of *caveat emptor* would have applied. It would have been her look-out. Whereas, if he approached her, his very approach would suggest a regard which he did not feel. Besides . . .

A month limped by.

Patricia and Simon were meeting continually—by chance. From their easy, casual fellowship no one would ever have dreamed that they were in love. But then no one ever had suspected anything. They were just carrying on—with hearts of lead.

Presently the date of Miss Bohun's wedding was announced and invitations were issued.

Then two things happened—simultaneously.

The first was that Castle Breathless was entered by burglars while the household was at meat. The burglars, however, were

disturbed and made good their escape. A footman was knocked down and a maid-servant frightened to death. Apparently Miss Bohun's bedroom was the only room which had been entered. There a drawer had been forced and a gold bag taken. Curiously enough, the thieves overlooked what they were undoubtedly seeking. This was a magnificent rope of pearls, 'the gift of the bridegroom,' which was lying where Miss Bohun had left it upon a bureau.

The second was that Simon in some excitement began to do sums.

For the sake of brevity, let us look over his shoulder.

<i>Unearned Income</i>	....	£300	<i>a year</i>
<i>Earned</i>	....	£250	"
<i>Grey Ruby</i>	....	£450	"

*Total*.... .... £1000 *a year*

You see, now, what was in the man's mind.

That morning had brought him a cheque for seven pounds and a request to be shown the next tale that he wrote. Simon reckoned that he could write three tales a month.

So much for *Earned Income*.

Simon had just been left three hundred pounds. The money lay at the Bank. If he put it all on Grey Ruby at thirty-three to one and Patricia's dream came true, Simon would win nine thousand nine hundred pounds.

So much for *Grey Ruby*.

As for the total, the man shall speak for himself.

"A thousand a year. It isn't too much, but supposing we lived abroad. Say, Paris. I think she could stick it all right. I think she'd be happy. I believe, in a way, she'd find it rather fun. Of course she'd miss all the show—flunkeys and cars and the rest. We might run to a Citroën. And she could have half a maid. Clothes'd be the snag. We couldn't put up a fight where clothes were concerned. But if she could rule them out—I don't think she really cares about anything else. The idea of Life without luxury's never entered her head. It doesn't follow that if it did she'd fire it out. I don't think she would. I don't think Patricia's that sort. If it weren't for the clothes question . . ."

Simon rose to his feet and fell to pacing the room.

"One thing's clear—a thousand's the rock-bottom figure. I must make up my mind to that. Under a thousand a year it



can't be done. It *could* be, of course. We shouldn't *starve* on five hundred. But . . . No, a thousand's the lowest possible. With a thousand I could temper the wind. Unless Grey Ruby comes up and unless I can get thirty-threes . . .

"What's the alternative? The alternative's plain hell—for me, any way. I suppose I can plough through, but face it I can't. I've tried and I can't—can't pretend to. . . . if she was in love with Persimmon, if she was going to be happy—happier than with me—well, I could stomach that. As it is . . . I don't know why I didn't see it

"'Got to decide'? The point mayn't ever arise. Unless she makes a move, everything goes by the board. And as like as not she won't. . . . Well, then—finish. If she can get through, I must. She's free to change



"The chestnut, if anything, was slightly ahead. The shouting swelled into a roar."

that night at Breathless. I came pretty near, too. I said we'd defied Nature. But for some fool's reason I assumed the adhesions could be torn. That that was further defiance I never saw. I suppose I was exalted, drunk with a sort of heroism. That's all right to die on, because you're dead before it wears off. You can take a life-sentence with a laugh: but you don't laugh much when you're in prison, and after the first month. . . .

"The point is I may *have* to go on. No, it isn't. The point is I may have a chance—a chance of being happy and making her happy, too. If only she and I could thrash this out! But that's impossible. For one thing, her opinion's valueless. Whether she'd be happy poor, she hasn't the faintest idea. And so I've got to decide for both of us. . . .

her mind, but I can't do another man down. I can't reopen things. That's plain. Heaven or burning hell, my mouth's shut and locked, unless and until she speaks. If she says she can't go on, an' if. . . ."

He passed to the open window and stood looking down upon the fading street and men as trees walking and lamps beginning to come into their own.

After a little he laughed.

"I've lost my balance, I think—leapin' about like this before I come to the ditch. The first thing I've got to do is to raise the wind."

He sat down then and there and acknowledged his cheque. Then he rough-hewed



the themes of another two tales. Finally, he retired—to lie awake until dawn.

That morning he visited a firm of book-makers.

After a little reflection, Simon wrote them a cheque for four hundred pounds—an act which reduced his balance to eleven pounds ten.

\* \* \* \* \*

Goodwood was looking superb.

It was a perfect day, airy yet cloudless. Rain had fallen in the night and, stopping at cockcrow, left everything refreshed. Distance was clean-cut. For such as had eyes, the sheep grazing in the valleys made

sharp white dots upon the green, the Isle of Wight rode like a ship at anchor between earth and heaven. Background, indeed, had much to answer for, lending the meeting the air of the old prize-ring, rigged like lightning, deep in some unsuspecting dingle



"I turn to you in my trouble—my hideous, ghastly mess. Not for help, because you can't give it. I just call to you out of hell—call for a drop of water to wet my lips. And you—you can't give it me . . . because you're rather busy . . . watching a race."

Grey Ruby, however, was being mentioned. They would not lay him more than twenty-five sovereigns to one.



of the suspected countryside. The artifice of gardens and playgrounds, jealously kept against the builder's hand, had here no place. Time had stepped back into an England where men passed out of doors on to the open road and, lifting up their eyes, beheld more meads than bricks and woods than mortar, where parishes were worlds and London Town was half a fairy tale.

After a last look at Grey Ruby, Beaulieu strolled out of the Paddock and back to the Lawn. There he encountered Miss Bohun almost at once.

"Where's George?" he said, taking her hand.

"In bed with a touch of the sun. It's nothing serious. I want to go to the Paddock. Will you come with me?"

The man hesitated before complying.

Patricia knew him so well that, unless he could smother his feelings as never before, she would be certain to see that something unusual was afoot. Then she would question him: and Beaulieu did not want to be questioned—till after the Cup had been won.

He need have felt no concern.

As they passed to the back of the Paddock—

"Simon, I'm up against it."

The man braced himself. The time was not yet.

"Hush, my lady. Let's talk about something else."

"Listen. You don't understand. It's—it's not what you think, Simon." The man looked at her sharply. "I'm in the most awful trouble. I'm—I'm being blackmailed."

"Blackmailed?"

The girl slid a letter into his hand.

"Read that," she said. "Sit down here and read it. And then come and find me again. I'll be in front of the weighing-room."

Simon lifted his hat and turned away.

Mechanically he took a few steps: then he sat down on a seat and tilted his hat over his eyes.

12 Clock Lane,  
Crutched Friars.  
29th July.

Dear Miss Bohun,

*The object of my visit to Castle Breathless two evenings ago was, as our valuable Press has rightly surmised, to obtain possession of your pearls. That I failed was not my fault. My arrangements were perfect, but the car bringing three of my men broke down on the way, so that two had to try to perform the*

*duties of five. It seems I might still have succeeded if I had used my eyes. Indeed, that the rope was awaiting collection would be a disturbing thought, but for my foresight in taking with me the letter which lay in the drawer which I had time to force. You remember. The one addressed to Mr. Beaulieu.*

*I think you would like this back. At least, I do not think you would like it to go to Mr. Persimmon. You may have it for ten thousand pounds.*

*If the money is not paid on or before the seventh of August, upon August the ninth the original will be received by Mr. Persimmon and copies by your aunt and uncle and twenty of your intimate friends.*

*Just three points more.*

*If you call in the Law or seek to avoid my conditions, the several communications will be dispatched at once.*

*Secondly, overtures are useless. I will not extend the time, nor will I accept one penny less than ten thousand pounds in Bank of England notes.*

*Thirdly, I will deal with you or Mr. Beaulieu, but no one else. His production of this note will accredit him: and his production of the ten thousand pounds will bring him a letter which I am sure he will value, as well as twenty-two typed copies, which, if he pleases, I will burn before his eyes.*

*I shall be at the above address daily from eleven a.m. until noon.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*The Master.*

Miss Patricia Bohun,  
Castle Breathless,  
Surrey.

Simon put the letter into a breast-pocket and returned to Patricia like a man in a trance.

His brain was trying to cope with too much for a brain to control. Dreams, hopes, mountainous fears—the powers of light and darkness fought like mad to be considered.

The runners were going down for the Stewards' Cup.

Simon watched them dazedly.

Grey Ruby was moving well.

"Let's go to the Lyvedens' box," said Simon Beaulieu. "They won't be there, and I want to see this race."

Patricia shot him a glance.

Then—

"All right, Simon," she said.

They passed to the back of the stand and up the stairs. . . .

Simon took out his glasses and put them up.



"I take it," he said quietly, "that if you had ten thousand, that letter's worth it—to you."

"Yes," said Patricia, "it is. It's—it's a question of saving my name." She hesitated—then burst out. "But what can I do? Of course they think I'm rich. Not rolling, perhaps, but rich enough to get loans—borrow—find the money somehow, as rich people can. And I haven't two hundred pounds. I've got my pearls, but what can I do with them? I couldn't explain their disappearance. I might pretend I'd lost them, but they're insured. Oh, Simon, isn't it cruel? All round us people are sinning—callously, wantonly sinning—sinning for the sake of sin: but they never get caught. And I—I who've tried to live clean and play the game—because I love you I write one wretched letter that I've no business to write—and get clean bowled."

A bell stammered, and the tumult and shouting of Tattersall's ring died a sudden death. The race had begun.

Simon put down his glasses and wiped them carefully.

Then he put them back to his eyes.

"That's always the way," he said. "Would you like me to take it on?"

Patricia bit her lip.

"Well, I can't, Simon."

The field appeared.

Grey Ruby was on the stand side and showing up well.

"No, that's plain. Besides, it's a man's job. I'll stick to the letter, shall I?"

"Yes, if you will. But, Simon, what can you do?"

Grey Ruby was coming up. Yes, there was no doubt about it. Half the field was beaten, but the grey was coming up.

"Pat," said Simon, "I don't know what I shall do. My impulse is to break the gentleman's back. But I'm inclined to think that he means what he says, and so that wouldn't help you."

Grey Ruby was lying third now and full of running. A bay on the rails was leading and going uncommonly well.

"Nothing can help me," said Patricia listlessly. She shivered. "It's like a fearful dream. The impossible's got to be done, lest a worse thing befall."

Grey Ruby was second now.

A chestnut was leading, and the bay was falling back.

The chestnut was leading by a neck and holding his own.

"Buck up, Pat," said Simon shakily. "We're both—both in this. I mean—one second. . . ."

A confusion of shouting arose.

The whips were out now, and it was either's race.

The chestnut, if anything, was slightly ahead.

The shouting swelled into a roar.

"My God," said Patricia quietly. And then again, "My God." She drew in her breath. "I turn to you in my trouble—my hideous, ghastly mess. Not for help, because you can't give it. I just call to you out of hell—call for a drop of water to wet my lips. And you—you can't give it me . . . because you're rather busy . . . *watching a race.*" She laughed wildly. Simon put down his glasses. "And the letter that's doing me in— Never mind. What's won?"

"Grey Ruby," said Simon shortly, marking his card. "And don't you worry, lady. You're out of the wood."

Patricia stared.

"Out of the wood?" she repeated.

Simon smiled back.

"Clean," he said. "Bless your pretty bright eyes. Going to the Wakefields' dance on Tuesday night?"

"I was."

"Well, go. I give you my word that there and then you shall have your letter back." He opened the door of the box. "And now let's find the Club tent and try some tea."

\* \* \* \* \*

At a quarter to twelve on the following Tuesday morning Simon was ushered into a private room.

This was an office, smart and well-furnished, with ground-glass panes in the widows and three oak doors massively built.

A peculiarity of the doors was that they had no handles.

A large, bland, smooth-faced gentleman, wearing blue glasses and sitting behind a table, rose to his feet.

"Sit down, Mr. Beaulieu."

"I prefer," said Simon, "to stand."

The other inclined his head and resumed his seat.

"As you please. You have your credentials?"

"There they are." The Master's letter passed. "I have the money also."

"But naturally," said the smooth-faced gentleman. He took an envelope from a drawer and smiled affectionately upon it



"This is Miss Bohun's letter. I like her handwriting. It reminds me of my dear mother's."

"Indeed," said Simon. "May I see it—as a matter of form?"

The other tossed it across.

"Pray observe that I trust you," he said.

"Why not?" said Simon Beaulieu.

He took out the letter, glanced at beginning and end, put it back in its envelope and slid this into a pocket. Then he took out ten packets of notes and laid them upon the table.

"Count them, please," he said.

The smooth-faced gentleman smiled.

"I always do," he said, "as a matter of form."

Each packet contained ten notes—for one hundred pounds apiece.

That this was so The Master proceeded to verify, taking his own time.

Simon stood like a statue.

At length the other looked up.

"Quite right," he said comfortably. He pointed to a pile of envelopes. "There are the twenty-two copies. Will you take them also? Or shall I burn them now?"

"Burn them, please."

The Master stepped to the fireplace, set the envelopes in the grate, and lighted a gas jet which was fixed beneath the bars.

The papers began to flame almost at once.

In silence the two men stood, watching them burn.

Presently The Master turned and, picking up his own letter, added that to the pyre.

"A distressing incident," he said, "now happily closed. This little room has seen the dissipation of so many tragedies."

"You don't say so?" said Simon drily.

"It's almost a shrine, isn't it?"

The other laughed.

"At least," he said, "its suppliants are very generous."

"You choose them for their generosity?"

The rogue spread out his hands and put his head on one side.

"That," he said, with the air of a past-master, "that is the secret of blackmail."

"Then if I were you," said Simon, "I should chuck in your hand." The other stiffened. "If Grey Ruby hadn't won the Stewards' Cup, I imagine you would have died about five minutes ago."

The other stooped to rake the ashes to dust.

"Perhaps," he said. "But what a magnificent race! Neck and neck for a furlong,

and won by a head. I lost a bit on Sweden, but I must confess I enjoy——"

Simon lunged.

"Take my advice," he said, "and chuck in your hand. You've got your money by a fluke—the purest fluke."

The Master straightened his back, poker in hand.

Two spots of colour burned in the great smooth face.

"I never fluke," he said majestically.

Simon smiled back. Then he raised his eyebrows and turned to the door.

The other's voice rang out.

"I say I never fluke. *Take—back—those—notes.*"

Simon turned, still smiling, to look the speaker in the eyes.

"I wouldn't touch them," he said, "with the end of a ten-foot pole."

The Master recoiled. Then he seemed to shrink into himself.

The two red spots spread into deep blotches, and a hand went up to cover the quivering mouth.

For a moment he stood motionless. Then, with a visible effort, he touched the arm of his chair.

A bell throbbed.

Almost at once the door opened, and Simon passed out.

\* \* \* \* \*

Patricia fingered her letter as though it were unreal.

At length—

"I—I can't say much," she said shakily. "And I can't attempt to thank."

"You know that I want no thanks," said Simon Beaulieu.

"But I'd like to beg your pardon for what I said at Goodwood. I might have known, Simon . . . I—I've no excuse."

"I think you had every excuse," said Simon Beaulieu. "I should have been most bitter. If I'd just shown you my death-warrant out of the blue, and you—you'd said, 'One moment . . . I jus' want to see a man about a dog,' I should have gone off the deep end."

Patricia stared at the letter.

"I'm dazed," she said. "Dazed. I owe you more than my life, yet—I can't thank you, Simon. It—it won't go into words. . . . I'll pray for you every night: but, then, that's nothing. I've done that for months. The queer thing is I feel more proud than grateful—proud of . . . my man. . . ."

There was a long silence.

Then—



"Thank you, Pat," said Simon tenderly. He rose to his feet. "And now let's go an' have a dance."

The girl rose and led the way to the door. Arrived there, she closed it carefully and swung about.

"Simon!" Her hands were upon his shoulders, and her face three inches away. "Simon, you terrify me! What have you done? From the moment you left me at Goodwood, I've been frightened to death. When first I saw you that day, there was something wrong. Then you behaved so strangely—as if you didn't care. Suddenly you promised me the letter, as one promises sweets to a child. And now—here it is. . . . Simon, for God's sake tell me! What have you done?"

Simon patted her arm.

"Done?" he said, smiling. "Nothing."

"But why—how. . . How did you get my letter?"

"To tell you the truth, I bought it."

"Bought it?"

"Bought it. I happened to have ten thousand and I bought it with that."

Patricia tried to speak, but no words would come.

She began to tremble.

The man put an arm about her and guided her to a chair.

"Listen, dear," he said, and told her his tale.

When he had finished—

"Why," said Patricia slowly, "why did you put so much on? Four hundred on an outsider's the bet of a desperate man."

"Oh, I don't know," said Simon, regarding his feet. "I suppose one goes mad now and then. Wonderful shoes Stoop makes. D'you know he made me these before the War?"

"Why did you put so much on?"

The man made fast a shoe-lace before replying.

Then he looked up.

"Pat," he said quietly, "I'm not going to tell you why."

"You needn't," said Patricia. "I know."

She took the letter from her dress and put it into his hand.

"Read that," she said. "And see how minds think alike."

*July 27th.*

*My darling,*

*I'm writing this letter because if I don't, I shall go mad. My gorgeous engagement*

*ring glares at me: the pearls George has given me sprawl, pale and indignant, by my side. I've taken them off. I don't want his pearls about me; I want your arms.*

*Simon, that last night here we buried our love alive—our glorious, blessed passion, we buried alive. I must have been mad. I suppose I thought it'd die—if I thought at all. I was nearly out of my mind that awful night. I did faint once—in your arms, but you never knew it. . . . 'Die?' It'll never die. Think what that means. A living thing immured, that can never die. That can starve, but never to death. . . .*

*Well, I want to unearth it, Simon. I must. I must have it back to dandle and cherish and clasp—to warm my soul and body—bring the blood back into my heart. I must . . . I must. . . . But I can't dig it up without you. We buried it together, and, if it's to be unearthed, it's plain I can't do it alone.*

*Oh, Simon, my king, have mercy. For once in your life be weak. Go back on your word—for once. I've spoiled our flower by writing. Well, spoil it, too. We'll plant another, my blessed, that we shan't have to pick. . . . Just breathe the word, and I'll break my engagement off. And we can marry, my darling, and live or starve or die in each other's arms. I don't care how I live or whether I live at all, if I can be with you . . . you . . .*

*Well, there you are. If ever a girl was at a man's mercy, Simon, I'm at yours. If you're going to steel your heart—well, I'll go on. I must, I suppose. There's nothing else for me to do. Besides, I don't care. George Persimmon or a tramp I've never seen—what does it matter? It's you—or anything, Simon. Because anything else is nothing. D'you understand?*

*We could live on three hundred a year. And if we couldn't we could die. I've thought of it all. Squalor, dirt, rags—they wouldn't count, Simon, beside the light in your eyes.*

*I know I've broken my word. I know, I know. But if you don't break yours, you'll break my heart.*

*Oh, Simon, I love you so.*

*Patricia.*

Simon dropped the letter and covered his face.

Patricia watched him with the tenderest smile. She was quite calm now. She was out of the wood—in the sunlight. And Simon was close behind. In his own outrageous way, Fate had played into their hands.



Suddenly Simon turned.

"Oh, Pat—my lady . . . could you bear it?"

His voice was shaking: his eyes, the eyes of a man looking into the promised land.

"I couldn't bear anything else," said Patricia Bohun.

"No cars, no servants, no clothes——"

"No cares," said Patricia tremulously. "I'm getting all excited. Besides, I've had my whack. And——"

"But, Pat, think. We'll be beggars. With that ten thousand behind us we might have put up a show, but——"

"You only wanted it, dear, to spend upon me. And now—you've had your wish. Besides, I don't care a curse. I want to be poor. . . But, Simon dear, how like you to turn that money down! When he offered to give it back. Only a giant could have done a thing like that. But, then, you are a giant."

"My dear," said Simon, "I'm the weakest——"

"You're not weak at all," said Patricia. "Neither am I. We've played a splendid game. *It happened to be the wrong one*, but we were so mad to play it that we never saw that. . . . We're a couple of shorn lambs, Simon—and that's the truth. We sheared each other that dreadful night at Breathless—and went out into the cold. I was a fool, and you who knew better—you wouldn't open my eyes. And then the wind blew—a wind like a knife. . . . That was to cure us of our folly. And now the good God has tempered the wind. . . ."

"That's right," said Simon slowly. "You've driven the nail, Pat. We put up a show all right, but we were trying to play an impossible game. It was when I realised that that I decided to put the money on. I didn't know how you felt, but I wanted to have it ready—in case you moved."

"In case I moved?" said Patricia, knitting her brows. Suddenly she sat up. "D'you mean you'd 've waited on me?"

"Of course," said Simon. "Even with the money behind me, I couldn't 've given tongue. I love you better, Pat, than heaven and earth, and I wouldn't give you up now for fifty rolling worlds—but if you hadn't spoken I couldn't have opened my mouth. But then you did speak, lady. You wrote me the sweetest letter that ever—— What is it, Pat?"

Patricia put a hand to her head.

"This," she said faintly. "If that letter hadn't been stolen, it wouldn't 've gone."

"Pat!"

The girl nodded.

"I hadn't the heart to destroy it: but I'd locked it away and thrown the key into the garden, because—I was so anxious . . . to play the game."

\* \* \* \* \*

Six months had gone by, and Simon Beaulieu had earned three hundred pounds.

The little flat at Chartres was becoming a luxurious apartment. Now that the tiles were down, the tiny bathroom alone was a flashing chapel of ease. . . .

Sitting at work at his table, Simon looked out of the window with a thankful heart.

"I'm one franc out," murmured Mrs. Beaulieu. Pencil to lip, she regarded the cornice thoughtfully. "Now what did I spend that on?"

Her husband surveyed her profile with some emotion. He may be forgiven. Its beauty was really startling.

At length—

"Cream?" he suggested.

"No. I've got that down. Oh, I know. There was a poor woman at the butter-stall with the cutest little boy. She was getting the cheapest butter, and when they told her eggs were seven francs—they've gone up, you know—she wouldn't have any. And there was I, getting the best butter and a pot of honey and some cream. It seemed so awful. . . . And the little boy was watching me with great, big eyes. So I asked him if he liked honey. . . . D'you know, wrapped up in paper he'd got a little empty jar? And his mother said that he always took it when he went to the market with her, and that if ever she had a little money over, then they spent it on honey, and his little jar was filled. She said he was wonderful—never complained. For weeks he'd brought his jar back empty, but he'd never cried or asked or anything. And he was only four. . . . You ought to have seen his face while it was being filled."

"I'd rather 've seen yours," said Simon Beaulieu. His wife blew him a kiss. "By the way, I've always meant to ask you and I've always forgotten till now. That night at Breathless, as we were going in, you said I was unlike my namesake because he would have plunged."

"I remember," said Patricia.



"And then you qualified that and said that in a way we were alike."

"Yes."

"I've always meant to ask you—what did you mean?"

Patricia crossed to her husband and set her cheek against his.

"I meant that you had the keys of heaven," she said. "And I was perfectly right."

*Another complete story by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number.*



## THE FIELD PATH.

**W**HITE blooms the hedgerow elder; the wild rose  
 Fulfills the promise of her flowerless time  
 With bridal blush; an unmown meadow glows  
 With gold of buttercups: this is the prime  
 Of summer, and to-day I trod with joy  
 Those footpath ways I strayed in when a boy.

A lark rained music on me from the sky;  
 The lowly lapwing's loitering flight I saw  
 And heard her raise her melancholy cry.  
 A gust came through the woods with rainy flaw;  
 Then shone the sun as I bestrode the stile  
 Before the last long easy downward mile.

How memory deepens Nature's loveliness,  
 Making it ours, and, where in love we give,  
 Draws tenfold beauty back the heart to bless.  
 How fair—I could not think how fugitive—  
 The snares of sense, for from the joys of youth  
 Old age remembering knits the seasoned truth.

The steep track dropped, the village spire drew near,  
 And that green plot whose grey stones old and new  
 Bear many a name well known and one most dear.  
 Each cottage garden laughed in larkspur blue,  
 And to the low-eaved inn I came, to find  
 Familiar faces, mirthful words and kind.

MICHAEL WILSON.



# LAWN TENNIS TO-DAY

## THE MODERN WORLD-WIDE VOGUE OF THE GAME AND ITS PROSPECTS, INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE

### EXPERIENCES AND OPINIONS

By NORMAN BROOKES

LAWN tennis, now generally recognised as the most universal of games, owes its premier position to its own inherent advantages over other sports. The fact that it takes so little time and space compared with other athletic pastimes, and can be played indoors as well as in the open, and on almost any form of firm, smooth surface, would alone be sufficient to account for world-wide popularity, though there is much more in it than this. There is that indefinable thing called vitality.

When I was motoring three years ago in New South Wales, we came to a small township where the road was particularly good. We were held up for a short time whilst certain local enthusiasts removed a tennis net that they had stretched across this broad, smooth road. We apologised for interrupting their game, and went on our way, thinking that there could be no better illustration of the vitality of lawn tennis.

To Great Britain belongs the credit of having introduced this wonderful game to the other nations of the world. The Mother Country has also produced the most prominent players and held unchallenged sway until the beginning of this century. But, as all the world knows, she has now fallen from her high place. First America and then Australasia threw down the gauntlet, and, after some years of perseverance, managed to wrest the honours from her. At the present time England has dropped down the scale to fourth, or possibly fifth, position. America to-day undoubtedly holds first place, with Australasia a close second. The right to third position lies between France, Spain, England and Japan, this order being my own view of the lawn tennis merit of these countries.

#### THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND LAWN TENNIS.

How comes it that England should have fallen by the way? It seems to me that there are several contributing causes. First, and I think most important of all, there is the lack of interest taken by the great public schools in the game. I have seen and heard the reasons stated why the public school authorities of England do not welcome the game as a regular form of exercise and recreation for boys, but all the arguments used seem to me quite inadequate to outweigh the great advantages in favour of lawn tennis. In both America and Australia the game is now, and has been for some time, recognised by the schools, whilst the keenest interest is taken in all scholastic contests. There is not the slightest sign of other games being frozen out by lawn tennis. Young human life is far too exuberant and varied for such frosts to occur—a fact that is perhaps overlooked by the elders in authority, who may have lost and forgotten their pristine vigour.

Yet if the danger that lawn tennis might take boys away from cricket and football is a real one, it would only demonstrate once more the merit and vitality of the game.

Take any public school, say, of a thousand boys, and consider that among so many there must surely be a certain number who might play lawn tennis and concentrate upon it. Looking at the matter in this way, there would seem to me to be no doubt that lawn tennis could be played in public schools without interfering with those who *desire* to play cricket and football. Desire seems to me to be rather important in the matter of games. At Eton, for example, I have been informed there are hundreds of Wet-bobs, so called because in summer they



take their sport and pastime on the silver Thames and play no cricket, yet Eton can hold her own at cricket, and produces at least as many fine players as other public schools, and no one thinks much about it, because it is an established thing. Tradition and conservatism undoubtedly hold

able, and the hard courts, so much used during the cold, wet months of the year, are not yet nearly as good as they might be.

Thirdly, the conservative nature of the average Englishman prevents him from moving rapidly either with or even ahead of the times, like the younger and more fluid nations. It is in the nature of age to become conservative, and Nature doubtless knows what she is doing, but she sometimes gives us too much of a good thing.

#### GREAT PLAYERS IN THE MAKING.

At the present time it cannot be said that England has any really very promising or even possible world's champion on the horizon, and it would appear unlikely that they will be forthcoming in the future unless England is prepared to fall into line with the other nations and give her youths every reasonable opportunity of playing the game.

I should like to say a little about what I mean by reasonable opportunity. Just to play the game is not enough: the young must learn by watching as well. There is no game more de-

lightful to watch, and none from which more can be learnt in that way. No two players are, or ever have been, alike in their movements and methods. I recall that Mr. Beamish's style resembles very closely that of the late R. Doherty, and he could scarcely have taken a better model.



*Photo by]*

*[Sport & General.*

NORMAN BROOKES IN ACTION FOR THE HARD COURTS CHAMPIONSHIP.

England back in the race for supremacy at lawn tennis.

Secondly, the climate can always be justly blamed for the unsatisfactory conditions under which the game is played. For at least seven months in the year grass courts in England are more or less unplay-



Yet there are differences, obvious to any expert. Every player has his own individuality of stroke, and no really first-class player was ever machine-made—he must have had it in him at the start. That is one of the chief charms of the game as a sport—it is possible to do much, but not all, by perseverance and sound training.

technique, and then you put your own soul into it. I must illustrate what I mean by a rather personal statement. In Australia each state shows a different method of play. I believe very strongly in the forcing, aggressive type of game, and in Victoria, from which I come, they have based their game on such tactics as these, concentrating on a vigorous service and good hard volleying. In New South Wales they are lacking in service, the tendency being to regard it merely as the opening of a rally, and the tactics developed are more defensive than aggressive. Without expanding my ego too much, I can see clearly that Victoria has been influenced by my methods, and the point I want to make is that, if there were a really outstanding player in England with aggressive methods, this type of game would receive an enormous fillip, which it much needs.

#### TACTICS AND TEMPERAMENT.

The best defence is attack, in lawn tennis as elsewhere. This truth has been brought home to me more than once. Playing with Wilding in the Davis Cup contest of 1907 against A. W. Gore and Roper-Barrett, we were two sets up, 5-4 and 40-30 on my service. We had an easy smash for the winning point of the match, which, however, was missed. This point also would have meant the winning of the cup. Missing that smash shook us not a little, and so affected our game as to

make us alter our tactics in the direction of caution, whilst our opponents at the same time gained confidence. The result was that we lost the initiative, and the match at 11-13 in the fifth set. This was a sufficiently forcible illustration of the vital necessity of taking the initiative and keeping it at all costs, and of never believing



*Photo by]*

NORMAN BROOKES SERVING.

*[Sport & General.*

I believe that it would be of immense benefit in England if leading players gave exhibition matches at the schools. It would arouse keenness and lead to imitation, in spite of what I have just said about individuality. It is rather like learning to play the piano or the violin in this respect—you imitate your master for the fundamental



that a game is won until the last stroke has been played. Also I am convinced that it is always wrong to despise an opponent, however obscure and inexperienced he may be. There are always surprises awaiting those who underestimate their opponents.

That brings me to the questions of temperament and moral atmosphere. A player who is apparently phlegmatic, taking the rough with the smooth, may not really be so. If he is, then he is mentally sluggish, and can never be a great player. What is wanted is supreme self-control that conceals a state of tension in which one's whole



Photo by]

[Sport &amp; General.

## AFTER SERVICE.

being is strung up to concert pitch. A great player may appear to

Meet with triumph or disaster,  
And treat these two impostors just the same,

but he must be fully alive to both. He must not be indifferent. Concentration, of course, is brought about by keenness and interest in the business in hand, and in my opinion the man who generally lacks the highest degree of concentration can never attain the quickness in anticipation, decision, and action that are so vitally necessary. Mrs. Lambert Chambers sets a fine example in concentration. It shows clearly in photographs of her in play.

Closely bound up with the question of concentration is the "will to win." This, of course, is useless without the power to do so, but still more useless are the most brilliant powers without this will to win.

## EFFECTS OF MORAL ATMOSPHERE.

However determined one may be, however admirably self-controlled, one is bound to



Photo by]

[Sport &amp; General.

## THE FULL SWING OF THE ARM IN SERVICE.



be affected by a moral atmosphere, favourable or otherwise. My experience when I first came to play in championships in England in 1905 illustrates this



Photo by]

[Topical.

NORMAN BROOKES: A SMASH.

point. Shortly after my arrival I rang up R. Doherty and arranged a practice game, which I just managed to win in three long

sets. There is no need now for me to emphasise the obvious fact that my winning this practice game was neither here nor there. It signified nothing, and yet it gave me just that little extra bit of self-confidence which, in spite of all good resolutions about not being subject to external influences, may well have been the chief cause of whatever success I achieved that year.

In lawn tennis, as in life, it is not often safe to lay down the law. So it is also in the details of style and play. Most writers on the subject lay great stress on the importance of footwork, voicing the well-known propositions about making the forehand drive with the left foot forward and the backhand with the right. The manner of gripping the racket is often treated in the same dogmatic way. But practice is always different from theory, and in a fast game there is rarely time to think about the placing of one's feet. They have got to look after themselves. The player must have such suppleness of body and natural powers of balance as to be able to make his stroke effectively with his feet in almost any position. So soon as one starts thinking about how to make the stroke, all is lost. Training and lessons can take one up to a certain point only, and they are only useful if what one learns can be so taken into one's game as to become automatic, and for that to be possible the capacity to become a player must be there before a lesson is taken. One can have no confidence otherwise, and confidence is part of the will to win. One should always go on to the court believing that one has a chance of winning, even though the opponent may be reputed a far better player.

The power when in play to think on right lines comes with practice and experience. It will never come without enthusiasm. The stakeness that so many players complain of at times I believe really to be due to a flagging of interest, because the springs of enthusiasm have run dry. Thus the game of professionals is often distinguished from that of the best amateurs by a mechanical quality which marks clearly the turning of play into work, the shifting of the objective from the game itself to the not less honourable one of making a living at it. It will be a bad day for lawn tennis if playing for pleasure ever gives up first place to commercial objectives, as it has done in certain other games.



## INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE DAVIS CUP.

Games that are really games, without too strong a commercial taint, have shown their value as a means of bringing nations together in friendly rivalry, and so creating a better understanding. This applies, I think, more particularly to lawn tennis than to any other sport, thanks largely to the inauguration of the Davis Cup by that far-sighted American sportsman

It thus seemed at that time that the Davis Cup had been given with the object of promoting friendly rivalry between these two great English-speaking peoples. To a certain extent the importance of this cup was thus hidden until the advent of Australasia into the arena in 1905. Two years later Australasia's efforts were crowned with success, and from that time onwards the cup gradually increased in international importance.

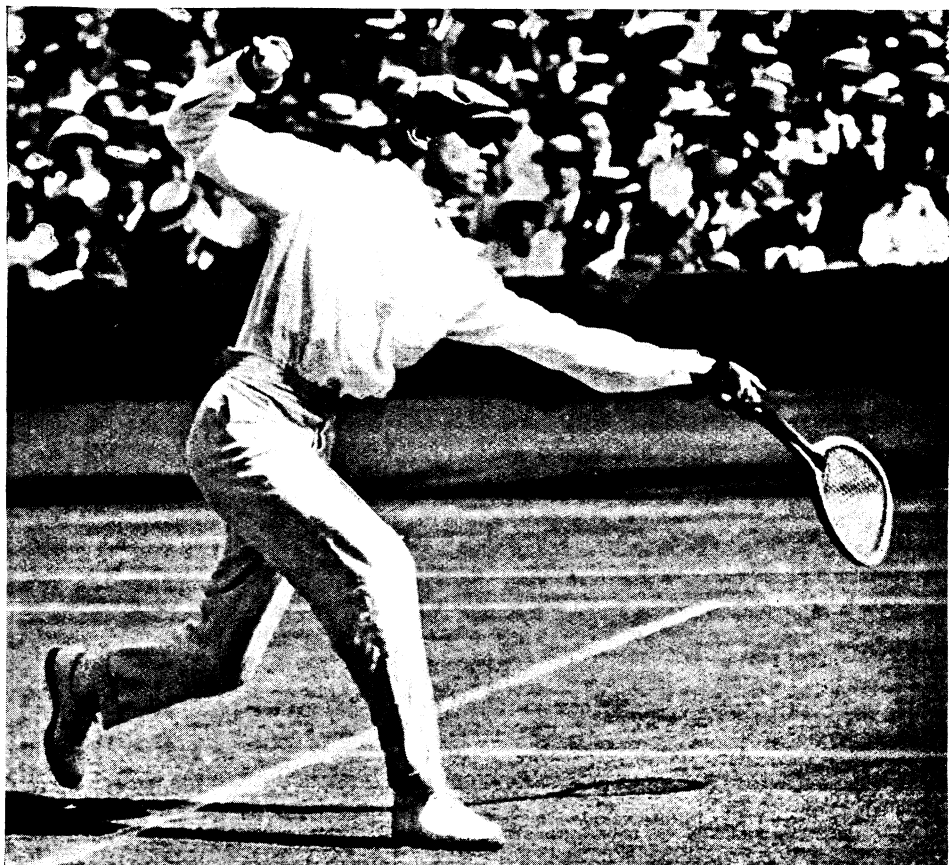


Photo by]

NORMAN BROOKES: A LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY.

[Topical.

Dwight Davis. I doubt, however, whether even he could have foreseen the future benefits, from the international point of view, that were to come from his donation of the cup. Munificence can seldom have been so largely and rapidly rewarded.

When the cup was first donated in 1900, there were only two nations, England and America, who might be considered first class from the lawn tennis point of view.

Each year the number of nations challenging for the Davis Cup increases, until it would seem in time that every nation will put in its annual challenge. It will not appear absurd to thoughtful people to imagine the influence of the Davis Cup throughout the world of sport weighing down the scale to stop a world war.

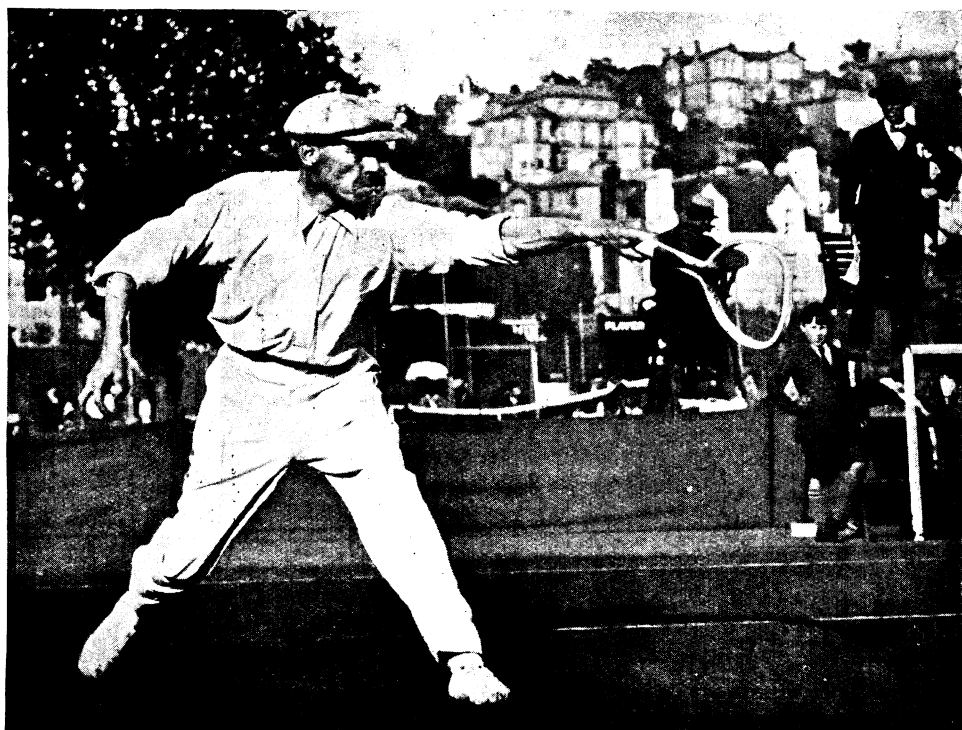
There is a chance with this ever-growing interest that the event may become too



unwieldy, and may be crushed by its own weight. I sound a note of warning, and I think the International Federation should consider the advisability of either restricting the number of entries, or of making the contest biennial. The latter, I believe, would be the best solution of the difficulty, as it would also have the effect of simplifying the getting together of the most representative team by any nation. This difficulty applies particularly to the outlying nations such as Australia. It is scarcely reasonable to expect the young

#### GIANTS OF THE PAST AND OF THE PRESENT.

I have often been asked what I think of the best players of to-day as compared with the giants of the past. To say, as many people do, that the best in the world to-day are superior by comparison seems to me purely a matter of conjecture. It is almost impossible to make definite mathematical comparisons between such players as Tilden, Johnstone, Anderson and Patterson, and Wilding and the Doherty brothers. I certainly do not believe that the game has been speeded up to any appreciable extent.



*Photo by]*

*[Sport & General.*

NORMAN BROOKES: A BACKHAND STROKE IN MEN'S SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIPS.

men of Australia, who are trying to make their way in the world, to spend four or five months out of every year playing for their country in the Davis Cup contest. The contest, of course, does not take up all this time, but the travelling does. Every nation is naturally desirous of being represented by her best players, and I believe that conditions might be made sufficiently easy for these to take part in biennial contests without too serious a loss to their personal and business interests.

Compare, for instance, the forehand drives of S. H. Smith and A. W. Gore with those of Johnstone and Anderson, or the all-round severity of R. F. Doherty with Tilden, or, yet again, the brilliancy of McLoughlin, both in service and overhead, with that of Patterson, and I think you will find there is little to choose between them.

However, that is begging the question, and as I am perhaps in as good a position as anyone to judge of their merits, having played in both decades, I shall be so bold as to say that, with the possible exception



of one man, W. T. Tilden, there is nothing to choose between the past and the present players, and, further, that no marked progress has been shown. If, however, the standard of the game is to be judged by the merits of one man, then I think it is clear that Tilden, when playing in his super form, has shown a distinct all-round improvement. No man, past or present, to my knowledge, has displayed quite such a mastery over all strokes and at the same time used them to such good effect. He is at the present time clearly the brightest brain in the lawn tennis world. With his great versatility of stroke, combined with his wide knowledge of court craft, he is enabled, if necessity arises, to vary his method of attack, to the discomfiture of his opponent. If you analyse his game, you will find that he is equally at home whether playing from the back line or up at the net. His service, if not quite so overpowering as Patterson's, is equally effective with its great variety and wonderful placement. Another striking point in his genius at the game is the fact that he always keeps his opponent guessing. This can be achieved only by a player who has a deep knowledge and a supreme command of all strokes.

#### LAWN TENNIS THE WORLD OVER.

I have played tennis the world over, in all conditions of climate and on all kinds of courts. Oddly enough, one of the most delightful surfaces I have ever played on was the one we made in Mesopotamia during the War. Some of the most enjoyable games I have had were at Basra and at Bagdad. That tennis could flourish in Mesopotamia during the Great War is yet another proof of its abundant vitality. Mesopotamian mud made an excellent basis and binding material for the construction of hard courts, but such material would scarcely be a success in England. If England had the Mesopotamian sunshine, doubtless Thames mud could be used with success, if the Thames did not dry up. As it is, I think that the hard courts of England are not yet so good as those of France. The surface is too often liable to be heavy and loose.

Covered courts are very valuable for practice and continuation of the game in bad weather, but I do not think so highly of the game on wood as on a really good grass court. The former is too fast.

Passing shots are too easy to make, and there is really less opportunity for the exercise of skilful judgment and the development of tactics.

The game on grass, the oldest form of lawn tennis, is, in my view, still the best. It is true that this applies only to a small proportion of the grass courts that exist in England and elsewhere. However, unless some other surface can be found, hard courts and covered courts should be multiplied and improved in England for the good of the game. It is easier to learn and develop your own individual game on hard courts than on indifferent grass, simply because you can generally rely on a true bound. If all grass courts were like the centre court at Wimbledon, the case would be very different.

It is somewhat surprising to me that the asphalt court has not been adopted in England. In both California and Australia this form of surface is used to a very large extent, and, in my opinion, accounts to no small extent for the number of high-class players these countries have produced.

Although not an ideal surface, the asphalt court has many advantages over the hard courts of England. It requires no special preparation for a game, and is always ready at a moment's notice. You are certain of getting a true bound, and can always depend on a firm foothold.

Another important advantage is concerning the question of upkeep. This, for the first two years at least, can be considered as nil.

One of the objections raised against asphalt courts, as compared with others, is the fact that they are apt to make one footsore. This is more imaginary than real, for in my long experience on all types of surfaces I have not found this the case.

In England to-day there are certain factors to discount the somewhat gloomy remarks I have already made. There is enthusiasm; there are probably more enthusiasts than in any other country in the world, even America, and by enthusiasts I do not mean those who pay for admission at Wimbledon and elsewhere, but those who play, and play hard. There is quantity even if there is not at present supreme quality. With such enthusiasm and weight of numbers behind the game, England, I feel sure, is bound to come into her own once again.





## SUCH AN ONE IS TAKEN

WHEN a man stands as quiet  
As any carven thing  
Upon a moonlit hillock  
Where thorns are blossoming,



So still the soft-lipped rabbits  
Come boldly round his feet  
To sit before the night-time  
And crop their grassy meat,



Know such an one is taken  
Into captivity,  
More sure than any wild thing  
In all the earth could be.



For Beauty's hands have woven  
The sweet wide ancient snare,  
And scarcely shall she loose him  
From henceforth anywhere.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.



# WHITE SATIN SHOES

By R. RAMSAY

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

THE girl stood quite still, half dressed, listening to the sick throbbing of her heart. It was her last safe moment of solitude. The giddy sense of excitement that had carried her so far had deserted her utterly. She couldn't even take refuge in that dazed feeling she had had latterly that it must be somebody else to whom this thing was happening—somebody who didn't matter.

It wasn't. It was she herself who had got to face it. She had awakened quite suddenly to that sharp knowledge. She shivered in her thin silk petticoat, cold with fright.

She had been a submissive little thing, too submissive. It was funny to remember how seldom she had struggled against the tyranny that had disposed of her. Even this dreadful thing wasn't her own doing. She had let them hustle her into it blindly, had never realised, never guessed how the vague uncertainties she had smothered would culminate in this insupportable moment of deadly fear.

A trapped rabbit! But sometimes a rabbit, crazy with terror, could make a mad bolt for freedom.

Shrill parrot voices disputed in the dining-room below, and a door closed. Up the back stairs came a faint clatter from the kitchen. Then again silence, an ominous waiting silence; and as she stood holding her breath, she heard in the distance the curious grinding noise—that noise that was so uncanny when you lay awake at night—of the big clock on the staircase getting ready to strike the hour.

The grim gilt hands were already pointing in its hideous black face. She had hated passing it when they sent her up to bed as a child, had shut her eyes and run up that turn in the staircase, always expecting it would jump out and snatch her; and, safe

above, she had buried her face in the pillow when the grinding noise had begun its warning that that horrible clang was coming. Oh, she had been scared with reason! When it struck now, its malignant, triumphant clang would call them to fetch her, and nothing could save her—nothing.

Panic seized her then, uncontrollable childish panic. Without knowing what she did, she slipped into the shabby blue frock that hung over a chair discarded, wrapped a cloak round her, and ran for the stairs.

Miles and miles of winking brass rods and red-and-blue carpet—doors that might open, passages—a dizzy flight downwards, and then at last the latch to push, and the street.

She couldn't believe it yet, couldn't steady herself, but ran.

The whole strange afternoon was a blur. She flitted through the streets, the crowded foggy streets where nobody saw her, nobody bothered to glance her way, in a rapture of dizzy freedom, without in the least knowing where she went. And at last she found herself in a railway station. There were taxis whizzing about outside, and a great many people surging towards a barrier, and piles of luggage, and a rumbling of trains. She knew that she must go somewhere where nobody could find her—must go as far as she could, and quickly. She would have to buy a ticket; she would have to go by train.

But she had forgotten something. Rum-maging wildly, she found a silk handkerchief and a sixpence in the pocket of her cloak. It was bitterly funny, wasn't it? Too funny to be quite real. She began to laugh.

Something checked her. On all sides of her travellers were hurrying, going, and coming, full of their own concerns; all about her was noise and bustle, and just ahead an engine emitting its warning



whistle. The rush quickened, and it was then she saw at her feet a bit of pink card-board. Some hasty passenger had dropped the return half of a railway ticket.

She couldn't even feel amazement; it *wasn't* real. But it was. She picked it up instinctively, recklessly, taking it without thought as a gift from Heaven, and, linking herself with the hurrying throng, was pushed into a train.

How tired she was! Shutting her eyes as she leaned her head against the stuffy padding, she tried to think, but the effort was beyond her. She was only conscious of an extraordinary sense of escape, of having done something desperate and of being proud of it, of dizzily wondering at herself. And the train, swinging faster and faster, rocked her.

She awoke to find the dusk creeping in at the windows, and a glimmering lamp above. The fellow-passengers wedging her in were collecting bundles; the brakes jarred, and outside a porter shouted something in a sing-song country voice. She realised with a start that it was the place on her ticket—a strange spot she had never heard of. They were all getting out; even the old farmer opposite, who had stared at her so hard—probably she looked queer—hoisted himself up with a rheumatic grunt and got down. Instinctively she did so, too, and watched them all disperse as she hesitated on the deserted platform. The train left her. She gave a little scared gasp as she saw it go, leaving her behind. What was she to do?

She didn't know why she had started up the road, but she was repeating to herself, "It's a mile and a half to the village," and something about the third turning. What was it the porter had said? She must have got confused about the turnings, for there was no village—never any village: nothing but hills and woods and a terrifying sense of approaching night.

It was silly to mind, to wish herself back among lights and people, she who had been so brave, who had taken such a tremendous step. Only she had never been alone in a country road after dark—had never been allowed to wander anywhere by herself.

The sun was setting so quickly. It was just a red eye on the horizon. After it sank there would be nothing left but shadows and queer rustling sounds that were worse than the silence—that creeping eeriness of the winter dusk. Ahead of her loomed another threatening clump of trees engulfing the road, pitchy black. Suppose something

should spring out upon her? Oh, she was frightened, she *was* frightened! Was that why her heart fluttered so dreadfully, or was it just fatigue?

It came then; it sprang out of the wood with a terrible noise. She gave one little cry and pitched forward,

\* \* \* \* \*

It was too late to go after rabbits. Hill set down his gun and went out across the stackyard, whistling to his dog. He had just time to take the short cut to Fancy Hall and ask Beatrice to marry him before dinner. He had honestly meant to ask her when he first came back from the War to his empty house. But Mrs. Blow had made him so surprisingly comfortable, and his days had been so full getting his dilapidated property into order and farming his own land—a fascinating gamble—that he had slipped insensibly into an easy bachelor way of living, and it had seemed a pity to make a disturbance, as marriage would.

For one thing, his matchless old house-keeper would be upset. She hated Miss Stafford; she would never serve under her. Still, marriage with Beatrice had always been, somehow or other, his notion of settling down. In a lazy fashion he had at times looked forward to installing her at the head of his table. She was a fine woman, Beatrice. It amused him to note her activities. She was a Justice of the Peace, a Guardian of the Poor, and Heaven knew what besides. Just the woman to keep an indolent scamp like himself up to the mark. She had looked uncommonly handsome last night at dinner. His mother's rubies would suit her much better than the pearls—they'd look too wan and colourless round her massive throat. It was really too bad of him to have let it slide so long.

Cocky was starting off towards the larch plantation. He whistled him back to the path. "No, old boy," he said to him, "the light's too bad," and went swinging on up the hill.

The dusk was coming on fast. He would probably have to feel his way back, for the sky was thickening and there was no sign of stars. Was that a fox slinking across the stubble? No, it was old Cocky—confound him!—stealing into the wood.

Well, he would whistle him out on the other side, the old villain. It was wet in the ride and boggy. He held on his way, skirting the trees, and came out where they hung darkly over the road.

Crash! His dog burst through the under-



growth, barking furiously, and something in the road, something dim and ghost-like, gave a sobbing cry and tumbled into his arms.

He held it safe, whatever it was. It wasn't heavy.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Blow had piled up the wood fire in the library. She had heard his step, and

She stirred and sighed; a small hand clutched convulsively at his coat.

"It's all right. I've got you safe," he said.

Looking up, he surprised a queer look of elation on Mrs. Blow's stolid face.

"She's scared to death," he muttered over his shoulder as he carried her to the sofa. "It was Cocky jumping into the road."

"Poor little lady!" said Mrs. Blow.

Carefully, tenderly he put her down. She was astoundingly pretty as she lay there nearly lost in that immense sofa by the fire, her eyes dazed, very blue, her mouth just quivering in a smile that was somehow immeasurably pathetic.

"It's so—so funny," she tried to say.

Mrs. Blow was holding the brandy to her lips in a teaspoon, talking to her in the wheedling key she employed with kittens and little babies.

"Sip it up, sip it up," she said. "There, there, you'll be yourself in a minute! Nothing shan't hurt you, my dear, dogs nor nothing. Mr. George will take care of you."

He would. He was unaccountably moved, looking down on that little limp burden he had carried into his house. Odd, confused feelings took possession of him. He was tumultuously proud of his height and breadth, of his

strength that had lifted her like a feather, of all that made for confidence in a scared thing flying to him for rescue. How her poor little heart had fluttered as she ran into his arms!

And what was she doing out there in the dark alone? She was no striding country damsel. That was a flimsy blue frock under



"The girl stood quite still, half dressed, listening to the sick throbbing of her heart."

she followed him in with the lamp before she saw what he was bringing in. She was no shrieker. She was back with the brandy before she spoke.

"Put her down on the sofa, Mr. George," she said. Odd he hadn't thought of it. He was still holding her on his breast. Such a little limp thing, and so badly frightened.



the furred cloak that hung about her, and one little foot was bare in its thin silk stocking; the other still wore a ruined white satin shoe. Strange that—

Half dazed as she still was, his puzzled look seemed to reach her. She tried to lift her head, to answer some question she saw in his face—or was it in the kind gabble of Mrs. Blow? But she was tired out. The words came dragging.

"I don't know," she said. "I don't know—I thought I would find a workhouse."

## II.

"Who's been imposing on you now?" said Miss Stafford. "You're too good-natured."

She marched up the steps swinging her walking stick, entirely self-satisfied and mistress of the situation. Funny he had never noticed before that her voice was so strident.

"Sorry, Beatrice," he said, coming out of the library to meet her. "I clean forgot we'd settled to go to that sale together."

"Yes, and we've missed the pigs. Pedigree Blacks! You're not fit to look after yourself, old boy," she said, but not as indulgently as usual. "What's this rubbish I hear? The doctor was down at the village with Hubbard's leg, and he told me. He was doubled up with amusement. Said you'd got a strange young woman installed in your mother's bedroom, with Mrs. Blow in attendance, and you don't even know who she is. He says you picked her up in the road, or something. Why didn't you come to me? I'd have bundled her off to the infirmary in a twinkling. Goodness knows what you've let yourself in for. Harboured tramps! She might have had smallpox!"

"Well," he said curtly, "she hadn't."

"Doctor says the poor young lady has had a shock. Lost her memory—like they do every day in the papers—and tired out with her wanderings. I'm to keep her quiet—very quiet," said Mrs. Blow in the background.

Something impalpable was in the air. He didn't know what it was exactly, but he had an intuition his housekeeper did know, and was inordinately pleased about it. Probably she had guessed at his errand when he went out last night, and was blessing the interruption.

"Young lady!" repeated Miss Stafford. "Really, George—"

"A lady she is," said Mrs. Blow in high satisfaction. "I never *did* see such fine underthings, and her stockings—"

"Cheap finery, I suppose!" said Miss Stafford sharply. There was displeasure in her voice. She was not in the least suspicious of a comparison with her own appearance, clad as she was in a homespun suit hewn out of a bale of tweed by the local tailor, and solid brogues, but excited by the housekeeper's impertinence in speaking up to her.

"Silk all the way up," said Mrs. Blow. She said nothing about the shoe, the little white satin shoe with its fantastic French heel, its thin substance rubbed through in trudging the flinty roads. It was a secret between her and her master. Wise woman! Somehow he didn't want to share it with Beatrice. Did Mrs. Blow feel it, too, his queer reluctance to betray to that practical personage's hard eye such a pathetic token of urgent flight? Silly little satin shoe tucked away, Heaven knew why, in a locked drawer of his desk!

He smiled and obliged himself to listen to Beatrice's lecture. He was accustomed to her habit of rating his shortcomings, had rather enjoyed it hitherto, had, anyway, submitted with a good-humoured patience that was at last likely to be exhausted. Unsentimentally he considered her. Poor old Beatrice! It had never before struck him how like she was to a crowing hen. What was she pronouncing now?

"Of all mad things," she scolded, "this is too utterly absurd! If you'd had a grain of common-sense, George, you'd have come across and consulted me. I was the proper person—"

It was her best Board of Guardians manner. He laughed outright, aware of Mrs. Blow in the background snorting, all ruffled feathers. But still this assumption of authority was beyond a joke. Somehow—somehow there was a difference to-day in his attitude towards her. He wasn't laughing now; he was trying to control the hot anger her hectoring tone evoked.

"I don't see that," he said, as quietly as he could. In the background—he could swear to it—Mrs. Blow was chuckling.

Beatrice stared at him for a moment. Her eyes were round and prominent and astonished. "My dear, good man!" she said.

Well, she *had* no warrant for interference. He hadn't yet put himself and his household at her disposal, and for that he was privately thanking Heaven. A joke was no joke when it was transmuted into sober earnest, and she would have had a sound title to meddle in this if he had committed himself last



night. It smarted. But he wasn't going to be bullied now. This was a profitable glimpse of how that kind of thing would look from the inside, and it was enough for him. Queer that side of her hadn't come home to him sooner. But then he had hitherto thought of her as a good sort, a jolly, kind-hearted woman. Busybody! Could she think of nothing more pitiful in this case than her own self-importance? Hadn't she a single charitable impulse towards the poor wandering child he had sheltered? Queer, wasn't it, his fierce feeling?

This time it was Beatrice who contrived to laugh, after a significant pause, heartily and loud. "Goodness!" she said. "Well, we needn't fight about it. I'll be good-natured, George, and take over the responsibility, and that's more than you deserve. I'd better see the girl at once, Mrs. Blow, and then I can settle what's to be done with her."

He glanced doubtfully at his housekeeper. There was a victorious gleam in her eye, but her manner was quite respectful. It struck him that for some mysterious reason she relished the opportunity of letting Miss Stafford behold her patient. She moved obediently towards the stairs.

"I can let you have a peep at her, miss," she said, with condescension. "But you mustn't make a noise. She's asleep, poor lamb, and the doctor said we were on no account to wake her."

He looked at Beatrice narrowly when she came down from her visit of inspection. He wondered—he just wondered if the sight of that little wan face, the little exhausted figure, sleeping so trustfully in the big bed, with her short gold hair spread on the pillow, had moved her. It had stirred him so deeply; that last glimpse he had had himself when he had carried her upstairs and laid her down had stayed with him ever since, sweet and poignant.

But Miss Stafford wasn't touched, or if she were she gave no sign of weakness. "Well," she said briskly, "there's nothing to be done for the present, anyhow. The child looks worn out. And I've told Mrs. Blow to keep her in her part of the house, so she won't bother you much when she gets downstairs. That is, if her people haven't claimed her before then. Of course I shall make inquiries. And I'll look in again to-morrow and talk things over."

She did. She took an enormous interest in the little girl, as she called her. She was perpetually in and out of the house. It was

she who, unsuccessful in her inquiries, suggested that they should advertise.

"Not without her permission," he had said curtly.

"My dear boy, why on earth should we consult her?" said Beatrice sharply. "We have to act for the best. And since the child herself is dumb——"

He didn't want to quarrel with Beatrice. If he noticed a peevishness in her manner lately, an inclination to show off, as it were, before others, he reminded himself that, but for the grace of God, she might have had an indisputable right to do it. The recollection astonished him now, but it kept him humble and inspired in him a kind of hangdog meekness towards her officiousness. But he couldn't have that.

"Let it alone," he said. "And I won't have her cross-examined. Don't worry the child! She's safe here, and she'll tell us when she remembers——"

"Humph!" said Beatrice, but desisted.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was on a market day when Miss Stafford, J.P., in all her glory, was sitting on the Bench, that Mrs. Blow brought her patient down. Proudly she lay in wait for her master when he came in, intercepting him as he came from the stable yard. She smiled to herself as he followed quickly along the passage that led to her sitting-room.

Her charge was the prettiest thing, thought Mrs. Blow, enthroned on the old schoolroom sofa. And George himself was arrested. He stood stock-still on the threshold. She looked so young, so fragile, and so unutterably sweet, so different from anybody else he had known. He felt an extraordinary thrill at the sight of her—an aching, that almost hurt with its violence, to be kind.

"The little lady's been fretting," said Mrs. Blow, introducing him, and retreated.

He pulled himself together and schooled himself to behave like that judicious blend of godfather and guardian that the situation required. But he couldn't altogether—he couldn't keep up his part of a benevolent host while actually looking into her eyes. Muttering something, he gave her a little red rose, an unexpected little late rose he had found under the wall as he came in.

"How kind you are!" she said. The soft voice trembled. "I—I can't feel it's real."

It wasn't, he knew. Not a bit of it. It was magic. "How do you like my house?"





"The little lady's been fretting," said Mrs. Blow, introducing him.

he said. It was a stupid thing to say, but it broke a silence.

"I love your house," she said softly. "It's such a dear old house."

Wild fancies came into his head. He wanted to pick her up and carry her from

room to room, to show her all of it—things that had been familiar to him all his life, but were always admired by strangers. He wanted to take her right up to the south attic, among the dusty treasures he had collected in that beloved haunt of his as a boy. Instead of which, he tried to smile down on her quietly, sedately, like a good host smiling upon a quite ordinary guest.

Her eyes were troubled. "You have been so good to me," she said. "So wonderfully kind, not asking—oh, Mrs. Blow told me you wouldn't let Miss Stafford write to the papers about—about me."

"You wouldn't have liked it, would you?" he said, embarrassed.

"Oh, no, no!" she said, with a horrified little cry. "It would have been too awful."

He had been right, he knew. And whoever her people were, they had certainly on their part not published her disappearance, had made no attempt, as far as he could see, to trace her at the cost of such intolerable publicity as must follow. There were some folk yet in the world to whom notoriety was disgrace.

She was taking courage to say something more. He waited. "I want to tell you something," she said at last, "if you don't mind—just you."

"Just me," he said, with a curious contentment. He wanted her confidence—wanted it for himself. She coloured: there was a distressed flicker in her cheek.

"They think I've lost my memory. Mrs. Blow thinks so, and the doctor did, and—Miss Stafford. I've let them think so. It—it saved explaining. It's dreadful of me, because I *do* know—"

He couldn't bear that note in her voice. It hurt him. "Never mind," he said hastily. "Tell me what you like—just what you like, and it shall be our secret, what?"

"Even from—from Miss Stafford?" She hesitated.

"Certainly from Miss Stafford," he promised, humorously conscious that the awe in which she obviously regarded the great Beatrice was not tempered by liking, and that her only fear was lest her exclusion of the latter might displease him. Her troubled face cleared when she caught him smiling. Dear little eager face!

"I *have* relations—sort of relations," she said. "I know who I am and all that. But I—I've done something that makes it impossible to go back."

"Even to let them know where you are?" She shivered with sudden panic. "Oh,



they wouldn't want to know," she said. "They'd wash their hands of me. They wouldn't want me—now!"

There was a disturbance without—dogs barking, a high voice in the distant hall, calling for him and then inquiring for Mrs. Blow. And then Beatrice came bustling down the passage and through the swing door into the housekeeper's domain. She looked very masterful in her huge fur coat, with her mannish felt hat crammed over her nose. The wind had deepened the red in her cheeks. She halted in the doorway with a look of surprise for him.

"Well, whom have you gaoled to-day?" said George.

says she'll take charge of you. So that's settled. I'll motor you over to-morrow."

"What is all this?" said George.

The girl looked up at him bravely. Her eyes danced a little. His look of—yes, it *was* consternation—had warmed her spirit.

"I couldn't impose on your kindness for ever, you know," she said, and there was some freakish echo of Beatrice in her careful words. "Miss Stafford has kindly found someone who will take me into her house for the present. I'm to try and make myself useful in return. I know I'm an incapable, inexperienced little wretch, but I'm willing. She does a lot of work among girls, Miss Stafford says, so she won't mind

"Her charge was the prettiest thing, thought Mrs. Blow, enthroned on the old schoolroom sofa."



She took the joke literally. "We gave Thomas Price three months," she said. "The Major was for letting him off, but I said, 'Nonsense! We'd have the man here again in a week.' And Samson, the butcher, agreed with me. Now, Miss Smith——"

The girl started, so did George. "Oh, I forgot!" she said. "Miss Stafford says I have to be called something or other till I—remember. And Smith sounds such a nice safe ordinary name that I took it. Miss Stafford thought it would do."

Beatrice nodded. "Yes, it's a suitable name," she said. "Well, Miss Smith, I've spoken to my friend Mrs. Driver, and she

my being without credentials. And she can't get servants——" Courageous and mischievous both, she was; but he couldn't twinkle back at her.

"But you're not fit for that sort of thing! You can't go," he stammered.

"Nonsense!" said Beatrice. "It's an excellent arrangement—for everybody."

He had to give in. There was too much against him. First Beatrice with her superior common-sense, and then that gallant little thing herself, eager to show that she wasn't so very helpless, and proudly ready to efface her late step of wild imprudence by undertaking anything that was wise.



He didn't have another opportunity to gain the confidence she had been on the brink of giving. There were difficulties in the way of a private talk, and he didn't want to insist, to scare away the shy trustfulness that he had seen in her eyes. Better wait, better bide his time.

And the time went. Till the last minute she was surrounded by Mrs. Blow's fussing and lamentation. (Odd, that good woman's displeasure, her angry, frustrated look!) Beatrice was very quick in her measures. Before he quite realised it, his house was empty.

It *was* empty. Something tremendous had happened to him.

### III.

"We miss the little lady, don't we, sir?" said Mrs. Blow at last, with her eye cocked wisely at her master.

And he spoke without premeditation. "Would you like me to bring her back?"

Mrs. Blow gave a cluck between a gasp and a delighted chuckle. She beamed like the rising sun. "I would, Mr. George, I would."

She stayed fidgeting about the library for a minute, stirring the fire, straightening his pipe-rack.

"It's but fifteen mile to where that woman lives," she ventured. "I've always said, Mr. George, that you look your best on horseback."

She understood him. Miraculous, wasn't it, how completely she understood him? He swung round and shook hands with her violently.

It was then that Beatrice arrived with something portentous in her demeanour. She began pulling off her thick leather gloves, with a nod to dismiss the house-keeper. But she didn't sit down. She stood majestically on the hearthrug."

"I'm glad to find you in, George," she said with solemnity. "I have found out an appalling thing."

He pulled up a chair for her, but she didn't see it, too full of her mare's-nest, whatever it might be. Probably something to do with the County Council. His mind was far from her and all her works.

"We made a great mistake in so rashly befriending that young person," she said. "I was afraid so. I saw there was more in it than the freak of a runaway school-girl. She wasn't the mere baby we both imagined at first—the silly little lost child you thought her. I had begun to suspect as much before I placed her with Mrs. Driver,

but she is a sensible woman, and I told her the circumstances, as far as I knew them then."

He collected himself with a start. "What on earth are you talking about?" he said shortly.

"About the impostor you took into your house so hastily, without asking my advice," she said severely. "My goodness, George, it was a mercy I got her disposed of before the truth came out. It would have been really terrible if she had been arrested here!"

Self-satisfaction purred in her voice through all the gravity of one who had been profoundly shocked.

"I never believed in her loss of memory," she said; "it was so obvious a trick. But though I tried hard to surprise the truth out of her, she was too clever."

"That wasn't fair, Beatrice!" he said hotly.

"Oh, I know you said I mustn't cross-examine her," she allowed. "You were very stupid, George."

He couldn't stand the smug self-righteousness in her voice. He didn't care what was coming. "Look here, Beatrice," he said, "before you make any horrible revelations—if you have any to make—I'd better warn you that in about two minutes I'm going to ride over to your Mrs. Driver's place and ask Miss—Smith if she will come back to us as my wife. I've just told Mrs. Blow my intention."

But it didn't stop her. "Poor old George!" she said. "But she's a married woman!"

And she didn't drop her eyes before his incredulous stare. There was triumph in them.

"There wasn't much in the paper about it till yesterday," she said. "It seems they've been trying to hush it up. So I hadn't really noticed. But I've gone through the details now, and the whole thing tallies. Some rich manufacturer in Leeds married this girl as his second wife, and she got him to make his will in her favour, and then tried to poison him, and when it was found out she bolted."

"Do you ask me to believe that?" said George. "It's absurd. Beatrice, you must be mad to repeat such nonsense!"

Her voice did not lose its self-importance, but her eyes were angry. "I think I have verified it sufficiently," she said coldly, "before taking steps. The husband is getting worse, and they don't think he will



recover, and so the police issued a description of her last night. Of course it was my duty to communicate with them at once."

"You did?" said George.

"Naturally," said Beatrice, without flinching. "I have just telephoned."

What a fool! What a pompous, ill-natured fool! There was only one thing clear in his head, and that was he must go to *her*. He swung out of the house without a backward look and saddled his horse himself.

Fifteen miles! He had better have taken the car. But the roads were bad, and he could go across country, and both he and his horse were in hard condition.

A sordid poisoner, and married! What rank nonsense! But Miss Stafford's officiousness might subject her to some annoyance. He must get between her and fear—his little ghost thing that had fallen into his arms that dark night and haunted him ever after. Tenderly his thoughts went back to the small white satin shoe he had hidden away as a treasure. He had wondered often. A precipitate flight it had been, poor little girl! Silly little dancing shoe, ignorant of the perils it had rushed upon! Dear little worn shoe, safe with him! As *she* would be safe, thank Heaven!

Mrs. Driver lived in a stiff house of greyish brick, with its back to the road. You had to pass the kitchens as you penetrated through the shrubbery of melancholy evergreens to the secluded front door. And as he passed, George caught sight of a startled face. He was off his horse immediately and striding across the flags.

"What *are* you doing?" he said almost roughly. The little wet hands were tight in his—poor little marred hands.

"Peeling potatoes," she said, "but I do it so badly. It's awfully difficult."

"Do you mean to say she treats you—treats you as a servant?"

She laughed at his horror. "Not exactly," she said. "I'm that uppish makeshift, a lady-help. And I'm not miserable really, or tired, or anything. But they're not like apples—they slither and slip, and you keep cutting yourself with the knife." She was crying. "And," she whispered, "I'm under suspicion. She looks at me as if—as if I were a contaminating pickpocket who must be watched."

That was Beatrice's work. Confound her!

"Look here," he said, "you precious little thing—will you marry me?"

She turned white. "Oh," she said, "but you don't know! I'll have to tell you."

Just for a moment he was dashed. He did know nothing. Then he looked into her little face, her magic little face, her eyes that had laughed so rapturously through her tears when he plunged into that dismal kitchen. Whatever it was that had happened to her and might threaten her still, she should be rescued from it as surely as he would snatch her out of this wretchedness with its great black Moloch of a kitchen range and its hard-scrubbed table. Her poor, pretty, unaccustomed hands!

"Yes," he said in a hoarse, but very tender voice, "perhaps you'd better tell me."

"I wouldn't have done it," she said, "if I hadn't been so scared. You see, I never had anyone like you to take care of me. Funny, just to touch you *so* makes me feel happy all over and safe again." She put out her hand and stroked his coat-sleeve, then drew back a little and went on, hurrying as if she were afraid to stop, once she had found courage to begin.

"My people quarrelled when I was a baby," she said, "and I was left with relations. I've been rather a nuisance in the world, I think—so unwanted. The relations didn't know what to do with me when I grew up. I'm not clever. And there was a man who was expected to marry my cousin Bess, and he proposed to me. So they said, 'You little beast, now you've done the mischief, you must just take him, and we shall be rid of you!' They talked and talked, and they bullied me into it. I didn't mind much at first. He was a big, fat, comfortable man, and it was a new thing to feel important. You see, I am just a frivolous little fool. I didn't know anything *then* about loving people. And they hurried on the wedding; they wanted so much to get rid of me. And then—and then——"

George set his teeth. She saw the grim look on his face, misinterpreted it, and faltered.

"Oh, I was an utter little fool," she said, "but I couldn't face it. I never was one of these brave people. Oh, if I hadn't been out of my mind with terror I couldn't have done such an awful thing!"

"What did you do?" said George in a curious, breathless voice.

"They dressed me up and left me," she said. "I was to wait for the motor to take me to the church—and they'd gone down—"



stairs. And I just felt I *couldn't* do it! I—I tore off my wedding dress and ran out of the house—ran and ran——” She paused. The thought of it choked her.

“In your little white shoes—your little satin shoes!” said George, and laughed. There was that in his laugh that filled her with wonder.

“I don’t remember,” she said, puzzled, faintly searching in her mind. His eyes

held hers, kindled, confident, absolutely sure.

“Yes,” he said, “and you were right to wear them. Wedding shoes! And you were running to me, you know, running all the way to your real bridegroom. But there’s only one of them left, my life, for you to be married in.”

And then, just as on that occasion, she tumbled into his arms.

## RELEASE.

**W**HEN singing voices stab the night,  
 My thoughts are birds with eager wings  
 That to a lovely land take flight,  
 Where I am free from sorrowings.  
 With ev’ry note their wide sweep spills,  
 As trail through long-familiar loam,  
 The clinging years. The syllables  
 Breathe all a breeze to bear me home.

It is the spirit’s home my eyes  
 See but in fancy. And I greet  
 The moss-covered forests that arise  
 As sylvan solace to my feet,  
 Nor know whence I that land beget,  
 Since ne’er a traveller can find  
 Where Sussex joins with Somerset,  
 To build a wood within a mind.

But Memory weaves her many skeins  
 According to her will, and so  
 I can pass down the Surrey lanes  
 To watch the Conway river flow,  
 Or see all Cambridge towers gleam white  
 Before a sunset-coppered sea  
 That has been moved, for my delight,  
 From Mullion to Madingly.

So in my heart is place to place  
 Linked by the love each yielded me,  
 Making one golden land where Space  
 Combines with Time to set me free  
 Of Here and Now’s rough manacle,  
 That world unlimited to roam  
 When singing voices break and swell  
 And give me wings to bear me home.

GEOFFREY FYSON.





"Something was staring at him, something so near that it shut out the rest of the world."

# LOUP GAROU

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

**T**HIS is a tale of the big timber that grows in league-long patches where the headquarters of the Saguenay find their birth amongst tumbled foothills of the Laurentian range. Thence flows the Saguenay, a chill and formidable stream, gathering volume as it moves southward with countless tributaries from unknown lakes and moose-trampled marshes, loitering on its way through stretches of cedar-bordered solitude, flinging itself headlong over cataracts where the tawny water rages thunderously day and night, ever more deep, forbidding and austere, till at last it merges majestically with the great St. Lawrence, the mother of many rivers, and spends itself mysteriously between the thousand-foot crags of Capes Trinity and Eternity.

All along the Saguenay it is a French country, as French as when, two hundred years ago, the peasants of Brittany and Normandy first fared northward into the

unexplored wilderness. Amid the big timber and beside unnamed waters they raised their log-hewn walls, with the mud-chinked joints, the tiny deep-set windows and the massive roofs that must bear the weight of winter snows. Out of the forest they carved their farms, planting grain between the unconquerable roots, drawing sustenance from wood and stream, beating off marauding Indians, gathering in the long winter evenings round pine-heaped hearths, utterly alone save when in summer the yellow bows of a canoe glided round a point and a missionary Jesuit Father landed from Quebec, or when in winter the man of God tramped alone through endless miles of big timber on his errand of mercy and peace.

But always there was talk of France, with lingering, poignant pictures of the land they had left, of the red roofs of Quiberon that look across the bay at Croise, and the cobbled



streets of Rennes that lead to the swift waters of the Vilaine.

In one of the patches of timber on Lac St. Luc there is a lumber camp, a nest of long buildings, ten feet high, that occupy a roughly cleared space close to the water's edge. From the camp there radiates a maze of winter roads traversed by a hundred lumber-jacks in gaudy woollen capotes, with axes and saws over their shoulders, and down these roads, which all slope gently to the lake, great logs are drawn, to be dumped, rumbling, on the ice. All through the day one can hear, near and far, the crash of big timber toppling earthward, the creak of straining harness, the crack of whips, the stroke of axes and the whine of distant saws. At night there is talk beside great cast-iron stoves stuffed with fuel, much smoke, the drone of winter winds and the plaintive hoot of the great white owl.

It fell on a day when the sun shone bright and the snow was like a sparkling blanket, that a man emerged from the Saguenay trail and struck across Lac St. Luc. He walked with a long, easy swing, bending a little forward beneath the weight of his pack. Threading his way between the piles of logs, he halted at the door of the main building, twisted his feet free of snowshoes and entered.

"Holla," he said, with a smile. "I have again arrived."

The cook looked round, and straightway forgot his cooking, for the newcomer was none other than Antoine Carnot, the peddler, the bringer of news, the teller of tales, the confidential go-between in the wilderness, the human link with the outside world. Antoine was all of these, and more—a bit of a doctor, a bit more of a lawyer, a shrewd trader, and withal possessed of unfailing humour and a heart of gold. No wonder that Pierre Colange forgot his cooking and hurried forward, hands outstretched.

"Ten thousand welcomes, *mon vieux*. No, you shall not talk till you have eaten. Behold, a partridge which was for the boss, but eat it. The wind makes a chill in the stomach. You have an hour before the men come in, so fill thyself, and say nothing till afterwards."

Antoine nodded and obeyed, while Pierre watched him admiringly. Then there was news, much news from a dozen villages, while the pack was unrolled and its contents spread on a table in the corner—knives and neckties, shirts and razors and mouth organs, gimcracks and cheap jewellery, studs and

celluloid collars, the result of Antoine's annual trip to Quebec. A great man was Antoine; had he not once sent a telegram to Montreal and got an answer the very next day, and he right there in Quebec all the time? Presently his wares were displayed to his satisfaction, and he sent Pierre a swift glance.

"Jean Deslormes, he is still here?"

Pierre nodded. "He makes good money, —forty dollars a month—and spends nothing save for tobacco."

"I was at Villeneuve this day two weeks ago," said Antoine thoughtfully, "and saw the girl Marie Fisette. They are betrothed."

Pierre laughed at this. "Does not the whole camp know it, and how many times has Jean not told us? Every morning he goes along the road making verses to that girl with his mouth. It is well that he cannot write—but perhaps I do not understand such things. I made no verses to my Henriette."

Antoine looked a little grave. "Sebastien was also at Villeneuve, and full of anger when he heard of the betrothal. Marie told me that he said strange and threatening things—that she should never marry Jean. Then he barked something like a wolf, and she did not see him again."

"*Loup garou!*" whispered Pierre under his breath.

It was a word of awe through the outlying French country. The story of the *loup garou*, that strange and malign combination of man and wolf, had come with them across from the hills of Brittany. The belief still held north of the Laurentians. It was always an old dog-wolf, tenanted by some evil and human spirit, endowed with wild powers of murder and revenge, a lean, grey beast that patrolled the winter hills and sent his savage note drifting down into solitary villages where simple folk gathered closer round the fire and glanced apprehensively at the window fastenings. Sometimes it was a man who took the form of a wolf to serve his dread purpose, and became again human when his deadly part was played.

This had been whispered of Sebastien behind his back. Where the man came from, none knew, only that calamity came with him. He was small, dark, and very active, with hollow cheeks and burning eyes, and moved about through the French country, seldom doing any work, but living apparently without effort. He was disliked and feared, but the folk made no protest—at least, to Sebastien. There was the case of George



Famieux, who threw Sebastien out of his barn one evening, and next morning found his prize cow with her throat torn out. One remembered that sort of thing in a district where cows were scarce. So now the good Antoine pushed out his lips and nodded gravely.

"Yes," he said thoughtfully, "it can be nothing else."

A little silence fell in the cook's camp, and both men had a vision of Marie Fisette of the parish of Villeneuve, Marie, the prettiest girl north of Cape Trinity, with her flaxen hair, and white skin like milk, and a smile that was remembered and treasured enviously in every lumber camp on the Saguenay. They said that she chose Jean Deslormes when she saw him driving logs through the chute at Les Arables. And what Jean did then ought to be enough for any girl.

"They will be married this summer, yes?" asked Pierre.

Just at this moment the door opened without sound, and Sebastien himself strolled in. He rubbed his long hands to set the blood going, glanced shrewdly at the two men, and stared meaningly toward the heaped platters on the stove. Pierre gave him food, this being the law of the wilderness, while Antoine began to rearrange his stock. Both were a little breathless. Presently Sebastien pushed away his plate.

"Without doubt, Pierre, you are the best cook in the Saguenay camps. I will tell them so in Villeneuve." He lit his pipe and began to smoke contentedly.

"You go, then, to Villeneuve?" hazarded Antoine.

"Yes, I start at once, this very day."

"By the Saguenay trail?"

Sebastien sent him an inscrutable smile. "My trail is my own, Antoine." Then, meaningly: "Let him follow who can."

"It is ninety miles to Villeneuve as the goose flies. What takes you there in mid-winter?"

"The thing that takes all men to all places, no matter what the season—the face of a woman."

Pierre lifted a kettle from the stove, and the lid rattled. "Is it, then, that Sebastien marries at his age?"

"What is age to the man who desires? In five days I shall have what has been desired by many."

He announced this in a voice that lifted as he spoke, and he surveyed the others with burning, insolent eyes as though daring

them to protest. There was in his manner something suggesting that he had at his disposal powers of which they knew nothing. He leaned a little forward, every line of his sinewy body resembling an animal couched to spring, and there was but one animal in the minds of the others. He was known to travel swiftly, and always alone, but no man had ever found his tracks. And though he could not marry till after he had been in Villeneuve for at least three days, he now stated he would marry in five. That left two days to cover ninety miles, measured as the goose flies. There was but one beast in the big timber that could travel like this. Antoine glanced furtively at Pierre, and the latter gave the faintest nod. "*Loup garou!*" their lips signalled.

Sebastien got up, stretched himself, gave a short laugh and strode to the door. "For a good dinner, *bien merci, mon vieux*. It is I who shall feed you when the logs come down past Villeneuve in the spring. Every woman of the family of Fisette is an incomparable cook. We shall be ready, Marie and I."

For a moment after he disappeared there was silence in the camp, then both men stepped quickly to the window. Sebastien had reached the ice, and, putting on his snowshoes, had already struck southward across Lac St. Luc. He walked swiftly, dwindling, as they watched, to a dark speck that vanished round a near-by point. Antoine looked at his friend and swore a great oath.

"Jean—where is Jean?"

"He comes with the sawyers in ten minutes. But wait, I will call them now."

Pierre went out, and smote with a poker on a large steel triangle that hung close to the door. Straightway the woods throbbed with a clear, singing note that lifted through the green tops and caused a dropping of axes and cessation of droning saws, till down the winter roads trooped the lumberjacks, hungry as bears and chanting musically of Alluette and La Claire Fontaine. At their head came Jean Deslormes, a young, tawny-haired giant, straight as a hemlock and shouldered like a bull moose. He caught sight of Antoine outside the camp, and, running forward, flung round him a pair of gigantic arms.

"Ah, *cest le vieux* Papa Carnot. When didst thou arrive, and hast thou perchance been at a place called Villeneuve?"

Antoine struggled for breath. "I would first that some young fools learn their strength and use it less," he gasped. Then,



in a whisper: "No, I have not visited Villeneuve since a fortnight past, but——"

"A fortnight! That is but a moment, while I have not been there for two months. Is there nothing, then, to tell me—no message?"

"Shout not thy love to the whole camp, my son. There was one here a moment ago who even now is on his way to Villeneuve."

"Have you, then, sold all your stock to the good Pierre, and sent out for more?"

Antoine shook his head. "The name of the traveller is Sebastien, and he goes fast."

"*Le loup garou*," said Jean grimly. "But why to Villeneuve?"

"In search of one Marie Fisette, who he swears will be his in the space of five days. My son will need all his strength, and must act very soon. Let go, Jean; you break my arm!"

"He took what trail? Quick!" Jean swayed a little, with such a tremor as runs through the brown column of a pine when the saw eats at its heart.

"He said that his trail was his own, and that any might follow who could, then struck south around the point. Shut up thy Marie in thy breast, my son—and hasten; but"—and here Antoine sent him an eloquent glance—"search not always for the form of a man as you travel."

Jean hurled himself into the sleeping-camp.

In ten minutes he was out on the ice, and, clearing the strewn logs, swung forward toward the first southerly point of Lac St. Luc. Thus led Sebastien's trail—long, narrow tracks with the points of the shoes turned up a little more than was usual in a bush country, and the tail of one shoe with an outward twist. He would remember that. They took him round that point, straight as an arrow flight past the next one and on to a glassy patch where the water had come up and turned a mile of Lac St. Luc into a looking-glass. Here he slipped off his shoes, trotted across, and cast about close to the shore line. There was no more trail.

He stood for a moment, shaking his head like a great, puzzled dog. This was the trail that any might follow who could. His lips became dry as he doubled back, and, picking up his own tracks, traversed the edge of the patch till he came to them again. "By Gar!" he whispered. "By Gar!"

Eighty miles due south was Villeneuve, with Marie and tinkling sleigh-bells and pearl-grey smoke climbing from heaped roofs. Somewhere to the south was some-

thing nosing swiftly through the big timber. "Search not always for the form of a man." Antoine had said. Jean jerked out a tense petition to Saint Joseph, patron and guardian of the family Fisette, then put on his shoes.

There was moonlight by seven. It turned the snow to a pale purple, on which blue-black shadows of big timber lay like wide and parallel bars. He tramped across these, bar to bar, leaning forward with massive arms swinging, his legs working like pistons, a vast engine of a man moving in a white flurry and spouting deep-drawn jets of vapour. There was no sound save the creak of shoes, and a muffled thud as some overburdened cedar doffed its load of snow and straightened its tender branches in the stinging air. Presently he came to a frozen swamp. On the other side of this, where the shadows began again, stood a lone wolf.

It vanished as he stared, merging like one shadow into another. Jean paused for a moment while a new thought dawned, and struck off sharp to the right. Two hundred yards away he found it—a wolf-track, the triangular pad with the long sharp projecting toe and narrow trailing heel. He followed this back a quarter mile, noting that it paralleled his own, curving where his curved and holding south for Villeneuve. And then Jean knew.

At four in the morning the moon went down in a bank of cloud. Came a whine of wind and a few drifting flakes. The woods grew dark. By this time Jean was very hungry, and therefore felt cold, for in these latitudes the body, like a boiler, demands fuel. He shovelled aside the snow, made fire and tea, searching the gloom with quick and furtive glances, crossing himself between gulps. In ten minutes he heard a rabbit squeal. That meant death in the ground hemlock near by. Something else was feeding there, and resting—resting.

As the goose flies, it is ninety miles from the camp on St. Luc to Villeneuve, but as man travels, not less than a hundred. As a wolf might go, it is perhaps ninety-five. At sunrise Jean knew it was the same this time for man and wolf. There was not so much concealment now. He saw the gaunt grey form flitting wraith-like between brown trunks, a malign beast with deep, lean shoulders and bony, arrow-shaped head. It rested when he rested, ate when he ate, and kept always a little in advance. By mid-afternoon it became difficult to think of anything else, and he grew very sleepy. It



was only the vision of Marie, with her flaxen hair, her smiling mouth and white arms, that held him awake. At sundown he knew that he must sleep, if only for half an hour, or he would lose his way. There were no stars this time—and no moon. He made two fires of green birch logs, laid spruce boughs between them, pulled the hood of his capote over his nose, and stretched out.

Instantly, it seemed, he began to dream. There was no *loup garou* now, but only love and the whiteness of his girl's shoulder. At this unction his body yielded, his great muscles relaxed, till, smiling, he plunged into an abyss of slumber, lulled by tiny, crepitant voices from the surrounding forest. Then, horribly, the dream became distorted. Marie's face, so close to his own, changed to a grinning mask with black, lifted lips, flat, sleek skull and malevolent, yellow eyes. The yellow gave place to black. They were the eyes of Sebastien. Simultaneously came a strange warmth on his cheeks. He blinked. Something was staring at him, something so near that it shut out the rest of the world. He gave a cry and sprang to his feet. There was a scramble in the snow by the spruce boughs. Jean Deslormes was alone again.

"*Que le bon Dieu nous sauvais !*" he whispered, trembling.

From a southward ridge came answer, not by *le bon Dieu*, but the wild and haunting voice of the grey wolf. Through the big timber it drifted, savage, remote, but inescapable, the note of terror that in a season of the year carries its own message to fur and hide on the foothills of the Laurentians. To Jean it also carried a message, and he flung himself forward. It could not now be more than thirty miles to Villeneuve. He swung on, summoning his vast reserve of strength, plunging through underbrush where once he would have gone round, himself now a thing of the woods in the manner of his going—this giant with the mind of a child. He stayed not to rest or eat; he looked not again for the grey shape. Then a remembered hill-top—a winter road for drawing wood, an outlying pasture, the bark of a distant dog, and below, in the valley, revealed in the half-light of dawn, the spire of a church and the forty farms they called Villeneuve. Into the crisp air climbed forty pencils of pearl smoke, like the exhalations of those who slumbered yet a while ere facing the rigour of the day.

Jean tore down hill to the house of Marthe

Fisette, the mother of Marie. It seemed that all was safe here. He paused at the door, heard inside the crackling of a fire, and knocked. At sight of him the old woman dropped an armful of wood.

"Jean," she stammered, "how came you here?"

"As flies the goose from Lac St Luc," he said, breathing hard. "And Marie?"

Marthe did not answer that, but stared at him wonderingly and with a touch of awe. "It is undoubtedly the good God who has sent you, but how did you know?"

"Antoine Carnot told me, and, hearing it, I waited for nothing." He broke off, staring back. "Then it is true?"

"Sebastien?" Her lips framed the name.

He nodded. "*Le loup garou !* Together we have come from the camp on Lac St Luc, and this morning he also is in Villeneuve, but in what form I know not. Last night, when for a moment I closed my eyes, he came and crouched beside me, breathing in my face, and would have torn my throat had I not suddenly awakened. I brought no gun, for one cannot kill a *loup garou* except with a bullet that has been blessed, and there was no priest on Lac St Luc."

Marthe crossed herself fervently. "That is true—always it has been so."

"And the friends here, what do they say?"

"They shrug their shoulders and say nothing. It is not well to quarrel with Sebastien. There is that affair of the good Famieux—a thing all remember."

"And Marie?" he demanded.

Marthe sent him a wintry smile. "Look over your shoulder, my son."

She was half-way down the ladder stair from the room above; Marie with thick yellow, knitted strands along her back; great, slumbrous roses in her smooth cheeks, and drowsy love in her blue eyes. Jean gave a huge gusty sigh of delight, put out his mighty arms and lifted her as one picks up an acorn. She hid her face in his capote.

"My little one," he said softly, "my little partridge, thou art safe here, very safe."

Presently they put food before him, and he ate ravenously, telling in snatches of the trip from Lac St. Luc, "ninety-five miles in forty-two hours, by Gar," while Marie clucked over him as though she were indeed a hen partridge, and Marthe busied herself without words between stove and table. Then Jean got up.

"I go now to Père Leduc, for we shall be married in three days. Also there is the



matter of blessing some bullets." He paused and waved a hand at the encircling bush. "It is there I shall use them."

"I also shall go," said Marie, divided between love and fear.

He shook his great head. "Such talk is not for my little bird, but thou shalt go so far as the store and wait there. In three days my soul shall go everywhere with me. Be content, my swallow."

They went off down the packed road, where the snow-plough had left four-foot ridges on either side, down to the store which was diagonally opposite the church and the house of the good Father. Here Jean left her clasped to the expansive bosom of Madame Famieux, crossed the road, kicked his shoepacks clean, and found Père Leduc in his book-lined study. And books were precious north of the Laurentians. He spoke first of his heart's desire.

The Father nodded, smiling. He loved this young Anak, this son of the wilderness, with his great thews and childlike heart.

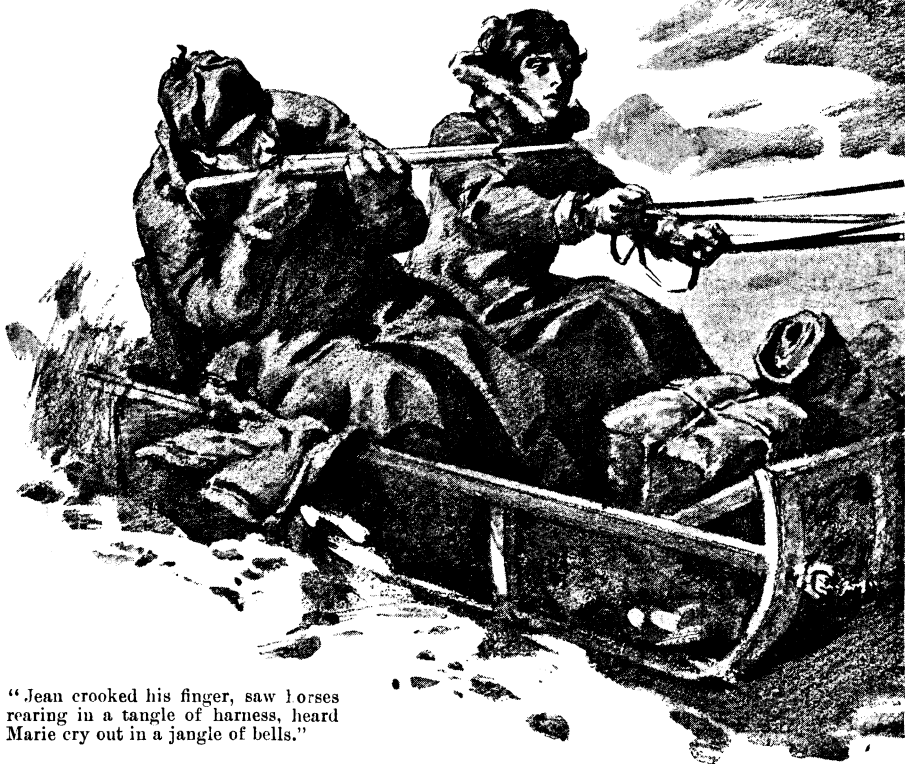
"It is well for you both—and the good Marthe agrees?"

Jean nodded.

"Then I will call your names at vespers this very night, so that it may take place in three days. A good girl, your Marie. You go yourself back to Lac St Luc?"

No, Jean would not do that. He had saved eight hundred dollars for a farm, and the farm of Georges Laurier—was it not in the market? He paused a moment.

"There is another matter, *mon père*—that of these bullets." He held out a dozen, cupped in a gigantic palm. "May it please you to bless them?"



"Jean crooked his finger, saw horses rearing in a tangle of harness, heard Marie cry out in a jangle of bells."

Wise and tender was Père Leduc, a pure flame that glowed constantly, healing both minds and souls with a wide spiritual paternity.

Père Leduc shook his head gently. Were he not very wise, he would have laughed. He knew—knew all about it. Individually he knew more than the entire village put



together. Part of his strength was that he revealed only a fraction of his knowledge. And now he wanted to hear what this enormous child had to say—all of it.

"Tell me, my son."

Jean told him from the very start, touching not on the physical marvel of the trip—for to Jean it was no marvel—but only on its terror. How did Sebastien leave

Jean's face? Why did he lead the way to Villeneuve, and, most of all, what was the import of this boast about Marie? There must be an end to this—the end brought by



"Again that lean, darting form, ears flattened back against the narrow skull, again that curving attack, rapid as light."

the flooded patch on Lac St Luc? What became of his shoes when he turned into a wolf? What did he mean by breathing in

a bullet that had been blessed. All Villeneuve was waiting for that.

Père Leduc put his hand on the young



giant's shoulder, and spoke of tradition and legends and the powers of evil. "No, my son, you yourself are about to give answer to Sebastien—a final answer. You and this dear daughter of the parish will have my blessing, and not these bullets. When, in three days, you leave the church with Marie on your arm and joy in your heart, you will have replied to Sebastien. He will have written himself down as a loud-speaking fool at whom not only the village of Villeneuve will laugh. That laugh will run up and down the Saguenay, till he will wish to walk into the stream itself to escape it. As for what you saw and searched for, but did not find, on your way here, when the mind of a man be distraught with weariness and perhaps fear, there is not much of which he can be very sure. You have had an evil dream, but it is past. Go now, my son, and take peace and happiness with you. *Le bon Dieu* is not forgetful of His children on the Saguenay."

Jean went out, cheered but not convinced. He admitted, however, that the good Father, whose least word was law in Villeneuve, would not state what was not true. He rubbed the bullets together in his pocket, stalked across to the store, and gathered in Marie.

"Behold my wife in three days—this little spruce partridge," he said to the fat Madame Famieux. "*Viens donc, chérie*; there is much to talk of."

Up the shining road, arms linked, they walked, while Jean told her the words of Père Leduc. Nor was Marie convinced. The good Father had never felt Sebastien's burning eyes, nor could he understand what it meant to a girl to shrink and quiver beneath that insolent stare till she became weak and helpless like a bird in a net.

"It is but one thing we shall do, Jean."

"What is that, my dove?"

"You shall meet Sebastien and take his promise, or make it, that there is an end to all this."

"Of what value, then, is the word of a wolf? Could he speak it?" grunted Jean. Then, looking up, his heart leaped. Sebastien had rounded a bend in the road, and came straight towards them. Marie saw him, shivered and clung the closer.

"Jean," she whispered, "not now!"

Drawing nearer, he walked more slowly, staring first at the giant with a strange, inscrutable gaze, and at Marie with a wild, unhuman hunger. His cheeks were hollow and he moved lightly on his feet. He came

level with them. Marie found herself pushed gently forward. Jean stood motionless, every sinew in him turned to fire.

"*Loup garou*," he said thickly, "*loup garou*, what seek you now?"

Sebastien did not speak, but lowered his lids, and from hot, half-veiled eyes sent the big man a look of contemptuous pity. So keen was it, so utterly penetrating, that Jean felt as though a hand were fumbling in his breast, groping for secrets. Then, as Sebastien was about to pass on, a mighty arm shot out and took him by the throat. He was shaken as a wolverine shakes a rabbit, shaken till his teeth chattered, and flung headlong in the crusted snow. Jean turned on his heel and followed Marie.

"It is done, my turtle, and the wolf did not howl."

He talked late that night with Christophe Famieux, at whose farm he was sleeping.

"Of course," said the latter, "no man has seen Sebastien take on the form of a wolf, nor have any seen the wolf come out of him. As for the matter of that cow, it was a bad winter for wolves."

Jean refilled his pipe. "Père Leduc said many things. Not only did he refuse to bless my bullet, but told me also that the *loup garou* lived only in my thoughts, and that such thoughts came sometimes from living in the big timber and lonely places."

Christophe nodded. "It may be, but the good Father has no cattle, and, anyway, such a beast is likely to keep his distance from the church. Perhaps, on the other hand, there is something better than one bullet which has been blessed."

"What is that?"

"Many which I have not. My short gun, for instance, that I use for geese in the spring. It throws buckshot like a hailstorm. It is in my mind that such a charge would be surprising to any wolf."

"Let me see it," said Jean thoughtfully.

He went to sleep an hour later, smiling like a child.

So on the third day Gaston Roubidoux, Sacristan, sent a rocking peal from the wooden church, and those of Villeneuve came in box-like sleighs stuffed with straw, and drawn by short-legged, round-bodied Percheron horses, to see the union of Jean and Marie, doubly intriguing because it spelled the humiliation of *Le Loup Garou*. Marie was all in white, with everlastings in her hair; Jean in a new, tight and very bright blue suit into which he just wedged his great body, celluloid collar anchored by



a large rolled-gold stud, yellow tie and patent leather shoes that hurt abominably. Then Père Leduc spoke words of peace and love, after which they all went to the house of Christophe, the largest in the village, where was given the marriage feast with riotous quadrilles and great good feeling. And Sebastien had not been seen by anyone since three days, which added not a little to the general hilarity.

Beaulieu lay thirty miles away—or was it only three? Jean, being dizzy with happiness and pride, was not quite sure when, at sunset, he tucked his girl into the sleigh, wrapping the robes closely round her feet. There was plenty of straw underneath. Marthe had seen to that. The horses, pet team of Christophe, arching their glossy necks, dashed off with a jangle of bells and laughter and cheers. The good Father nodded contentedly and turned homeward. These children of his—how gay and handsome they were!

Half-way to Beaulieu, the horses going like playful kittens, Marie pressing to his side, frosty roses in her cheeks, the blue eyes like stars—with all this Jean could hardly believe his own good fortune. What a noble day it had been, and how many others, even more wonderful, lay ahead! His feet were now very sore, that being from the dancing, his collar-stud bored a hole in his gullet, but he was very proud and bursting with joy.

"My love!" he breathed. "My soul, my little ptarmigan!"

Just at this moment there came from a belt of cedar hard by the pulsing howl of a timber wolf. Marie heard, and shivered. Jean heard and his heart stopped, then began to race. The Percherons heard, whinnied their alarm, and plunged forward. Jean, gripping the reins, lashed out till the woods streamed past in a blur. If the road only held open, he could make Beaulieu in an hour.

They swung into a clearing where the wind had got at the snow and the road was drifted level. Knee-deep toiled the Percherons, heads down, backs rippled with straining muscles. Jean stood up. Something shot across just ahead, turned, doubled back, and made a ripping, darting stroke at the throat of the near horse.

He pushed the reins into the girl's hands, and, burrowing under the straw, jerked out the short, single-barrelled muzzle-loader with the bore of a young cannon. Cuddling his cheek against the brown stock, he waited for a fraction of a second. The near

Percheron was bleeding at the throat. Again that lean, darting form, ears flattened back against the narrow skull, again that curving attack, rapid as light.

The wolf was in mid-air when the foresight covered a grey shoulder for a fraction of time. Jean crooked his finger, saw horses rearing in a tangle of harness, heard Marie cry out in a jangle of bells. Then a lank, hairy body seemed to have been thrust away, and stretched, twitching, just ahead of the driving hoofs.

He snatched back the reins, forced on the Percherons, and fetched them up, quivering, on top of the thing on the road. Here for a deadly second the steel-shod dancing feet hammered down, down, till what lay beneath was only a shapeless mass of bloody hide. Marie covered her eyes, but Jean, soothing his team, stared at it hard before he bent over and kissed the roses back to her cheeks. He was wondering whether the eyes of this wolf hadn't been large and dark and burning instead of long and yellowish grey. But he said nothing.

So in an hour they won through to Beaulieu, where life began indeed for both of them, and there was little talk of Sebastien. Then back to Villeneuve till summer arrived, and when the logs from St. Luc came down the Saguenay, Jean was persuaded to help the drive through the chute of Les Arables. Marie, of course, went with him, and it happened that on a certain day Pierre Colange did indeed sit at the table of an incomparable cook. The shanty that Jean knocked together stood close to the river, and the table was outside. Conversation had just turned unconsciously to Sebastien, when Pierre got up, shaded his eyes, and stared hard at the tawny water.

"It has been in my mind, *mon vieux*, that we should meet him yet once again. What is that between the two hemlocks?"

It had come down with the logs, come from the unknown, and now circled slowly in a great eddy. The smooth face was miraculously unscarred. One sodden arm rested slack on the ribbed bark. The eddy brought him toward shore, bobbing, as though something were twitching at his heels. The three gazed at each other, till Jean, remembering the prophecy of Père Leduc, lifted his brows and signalled Pierre. Then he touched the shoulder of Marie.

"Go inside, my little beaver. It is not for thee to see."

There is a cross underneath a jack-pine just below that eddy. Jean hewed it. On



the cross Pierre, with some misgivings, put the name—one word. He could not decide what else, under the circumstances, one might safely say. It stood there after the drive went on, and the following sweep had cleared every stranded log. Squirrels squatted on it, rabbits hopped about it, red-headed woodpeckers tried their strength on its tough fibre. But nothing more

happened till Antoine Carnot passed in the autumn—Antoine, who had never discussed things with Père Leduc.

He saw it, read the one word, and exactly appreciated the difficulty. So, smiling, he lit his pipe, sat down close, and began to carve with firm, deep strokes.

“Sebastien, *Le Loup Garou*,” read the next lumberjack who came that way.



## THE FOOTPATH WAY.

LOOK out my stoutest pair of boots—  
 I think they stand in need of heeling—  
 For Winter folds his cloak and scoots  
 The sunny smile of Spring revealing.  
 Sing “Hey!” for haunts of woodland elves,  
 For babbling brooks and budding brambles.  
 I search my sanctum’s sacred shelves  
 To find the dog-eared “Rural Rambles.”

Fair-weather friend, you made me see  
 The grace that lives in lambs and larches;  
 My notice claimed for lake and lea,  
 Or village church’s Norman arches.  
 You showed me pines on hill-top high  
 Against the sunset silhouetted;  
 Which track to tramp with trotters dry,  
 And where my whistle might be wetted.

“Turn to the left,” you say, “and take  
 The winding way across the hollow;  
 Then, skirting round the hazel brake,  
 The river’s silver reaches follow.  
 That lane behind the parish stocks,  
 Beside an ivied cot with ‘Teas’ on,  
 Will take you out before ‘The Fox’”. . . .  
 Oh, let’s away and start the season!

JOSÉ HALL.



# THE MYSTERY FISH

## THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF AN EEL

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

*Illustrated by the Author*

WE have named the hero of this little history "The Mystery Fish," because the title really fits him. For though the grand mystery of the eel, his place of birth and manner of development, has been at length elucidated, he still retains enough of mystery to satisfy the average lover of the marvellous. For the eel is, and always has been, "slippery," and slippery in more ways than one. The snake is elusive, and the fish a ticklish beast to handle; but the eel, though biologically a fish, combines all the fishy and most of the reptilian attributes in an astounding manner. He can force his way through the narrowest passage by reason of his bodily formation; evade the tightest of grasps thanks to the slime which coats him from nose to tail, and, thanks to the peculiar formation of his gills, is almost, but not quite, amphibious. This has been known and appreciated for centuries.

Such facts are, and always have been, patent to any average man, but the source of the eel's being makes a very different problem. So long as men were complacently self-assured that they had mapped the known world, the eel had ever a master card up his sleeve—tucked under his fin, would, perhaps, be a better phrase. At any rate, it needed a frank co-operation of the scientist and the fisherman—two classes of men who know so much that they admit they know very little indeed—to put salt upon the tail of the most "slippery" creature in the realm of Nature. The eel, twisting and turning his way through life, has assumed all unwittingly many a time the mark of interrogation. You may make a dead eel assume this mark easily enough upon a plate—mere chance, of course: you might do the same with a dead snake. But the mark is full of significance when applied to the eel.

For centuries he has taunted the scientist and spurred him on to increased effort, and at last the man has won, and the great eel "question," as it was once called, has been indubitably answered.

Hundreds of years ago an earnest sage of Ancient Greece, by name Aristotle, the acknowledged father of natural history, honestly believed that eels were "born of worms," or generated by decaying seaweed, or developed upon muddy shores by the action of heat upon the slime. Aristotle's word was accepted, as the clear and considered statement of a man of authority, by a nation of men and women who, taking them on the average, were anything but fools. You see, they knew the eel only as we—you and I, reader, the average man—know him to-day. They knew that he ascended their rivers in the spring, lived for an uncertain length of time in fresh waters, and then returned to the sea. Aristotle, with his amazing knowledge, one-half of the latter level with modern standards, the rest fairy tales, passed into the darkness, and in his stead, three hundred years later, came a Roman scholar, one Pliny, the greatest accepted scientific authority of his time, and compiler of some thirty-seven volumes upon natural science.

Pliny set on record that eels, by scraping themselves against rocks, rubbed off certain products—slime, skin, what you will. This rejected substance became endowed, or was already endowed, with life! Later still, in the second or third century, it was generally accepted that the eel reproduced itself by the simple process of entwining itself amongst its fellows, as actually occurs, and that the slime thus liberated from the tightly-packed bodies in its turn gave rise to more eels, infinitely small, but still eels. Yet other theories were extant. Men as sane as the average man of to-day, and often-



times infinitely more scholarly, believed and proved to the satisfaction of their contemporaries, that eels were evolved from horse-hairs. This was natural enough. Young eels are found in ponds and rivers, just the places where horses are washed, or obliged to stand for watering, or for the unloading of bricks, cement, or clay. Moreover, we must not forget the old days when all rivers had to be forded, often a long and arduous process, giving ample time for much horse-hair to be carried away. But still the eel kept his secret. That enigmatic question mark, which he could so easily assume, was still pregnant with meaning. The thinking man still felt that he had not got to the bottom of the subject. The eel went on doing the same things—the same things which he had done for centuries ere the first man saw the light. Each spring he appeared in his countless legions at the river mouth. Every autumn he was to be found, twenty times his former length, fat, smug, silvery of hue, slipping down to the sea. But though elusive, he was not elusive enough to escape the groping mind of man. Just as man was cunning enough to evolve the roughened or even spike-encrusted glove for grasping the eel, so, too, could he with perseverance come to lay an arresting hand upon the eel's nativity. Every year saw the trawler better equipped. The early sailing trawler, with a net of plaited hides, gave place in a few hundred years to the steam trawler with its elaborate engine-worked nets, tanks for keeping the catch alive, and a hundred other conveniences. By the beginning of the twentieth century the naturalist was fairly on the track of his slippery quarry. Not only were scientific trawlers provided by divers boards of fisheries to chase the eel with every weapon at the command of up-to-date science, from highly trained and inadequately paid ichthyologists to elaborate wireless installations, but other vessels, commercial trawlers such as furnish our table fish, were roped in by the dozen and set to scour the seas from America to Egypt, from Iceland to the Canaries, and far westward. The first veritable "baby eel" was run to earth off the Faroe Islands in 1904. From that date onwards the scientific Sherlock Holmes was fairly unleashed. With the aid of a host of willing workers, from lettered oceanographers to humble trawler skippers, the eel was tracked to his nursery, and the man who finally "placed" him, Professor John Schmidt, a Danish gentleman and Doctor of

Science of Copenhagen, will for all time be given the credit of having at last put salt upon the tail of the mystery fish. Thus it will be seen the data for this biography must, like the material for all biographies, be culled from many sources. The writer brings to its making many happy but weary hours with rod and line, spent often in soaking rain, upon the bank of river, lake, and reservoir; day-long talks with ancient fishermen; black nights spent with the eel boats; rambles round Billingsgate; desultory work in the "lab." and fascinating hours spent poring over the garnered knowledge of the great.

On a day in early spring a mother-eel deposited on the ocean bed, far out in the westward Atlantic, a "sitting" of some fifteen million eggs. In due season the eggs hatched, and a swarm of infant eels appeared—one of them the "hero" of this brief biography. He was very much shorter and narrower than a small "i" on this printed page, was as transparent as the finest glass, and possessed a brain, or the makings of one, capable of only one idea—to preserve the life that was in him. To do this he had to do two things. He had to keep on the move and on the feed. To keep moving he set his tiny body a-quiver with those undulating lateral waves observable in every adult eel. As for feeding, the water teemed with creatures which by their minute proportions made him look, comparatively, a giant. They swarmed around him, the young of jelly-fish, crabs, worms, starfish, lobsters, and "food fish," all the sea beasts that cover the fishmonger's slab. There were plant and animal forms by the million million side by side, and plant and animal at times combined. The eel ate of all that were not too large for him to swallow. He swam and fed, he and his fellows, thus for several months in inky darkness. He was a child of the mid-Atlantic abyss. What that abyss was like, the up-to-date scientific trawler can give us only the barest grounds for drawing a guesswork picture. We know that it was plunged in Stygian darkness, and that the eel, small and fragile though he was, was built to stand a pressure of hundreds of thousands of pounds' weight pressing upon every side of his body, the said body looking like nothing so much as a minute laurel leaf portrayed in blown glass. He lived in darkness, yet the darkness was illuminated at times, and that in a host of different ways. Half the creatures around him were phosphorescent. Crabs showed



their spidery outlines with an unearthly radiance; worms, shells, and starfish gleamed like the spots of paste on a "night light" watch dial. As for the fish, they flashed by like nightmare meteors, "lit up" by burning arcs of light which glowed in huge bulbs upon their heads, or were illumined

—some of them born to be sold for so much a pound in Farringdon Market—lived and, we suppose, enjoyed their lives. But though the darkness of that awful abyss would to us have spelt the end of all things, "nothingness" indeed, it was pregnant with change, charged with a never-resting movement



"Each hour, nay, each second, saw a thousand casualties in this host, and still it remained a host."

by light that traced itself in rows of dazzling spots along their sides, or waxed and waned alternately at the end of whip-lash filaments borne upon their heads and shoulders. A frightful, bogey-ridden world, indeed, of utter darkness and unspeakable cold, yet through it all the eel and his brethren

onwards and upwards. *The* eel and the countless millions of other little eels were not only growing, but separating. For one-half of that vast community was turning slowly westward. The other half was as slowly heading for the east. A great number of those tiny leaf-like creatures were born of



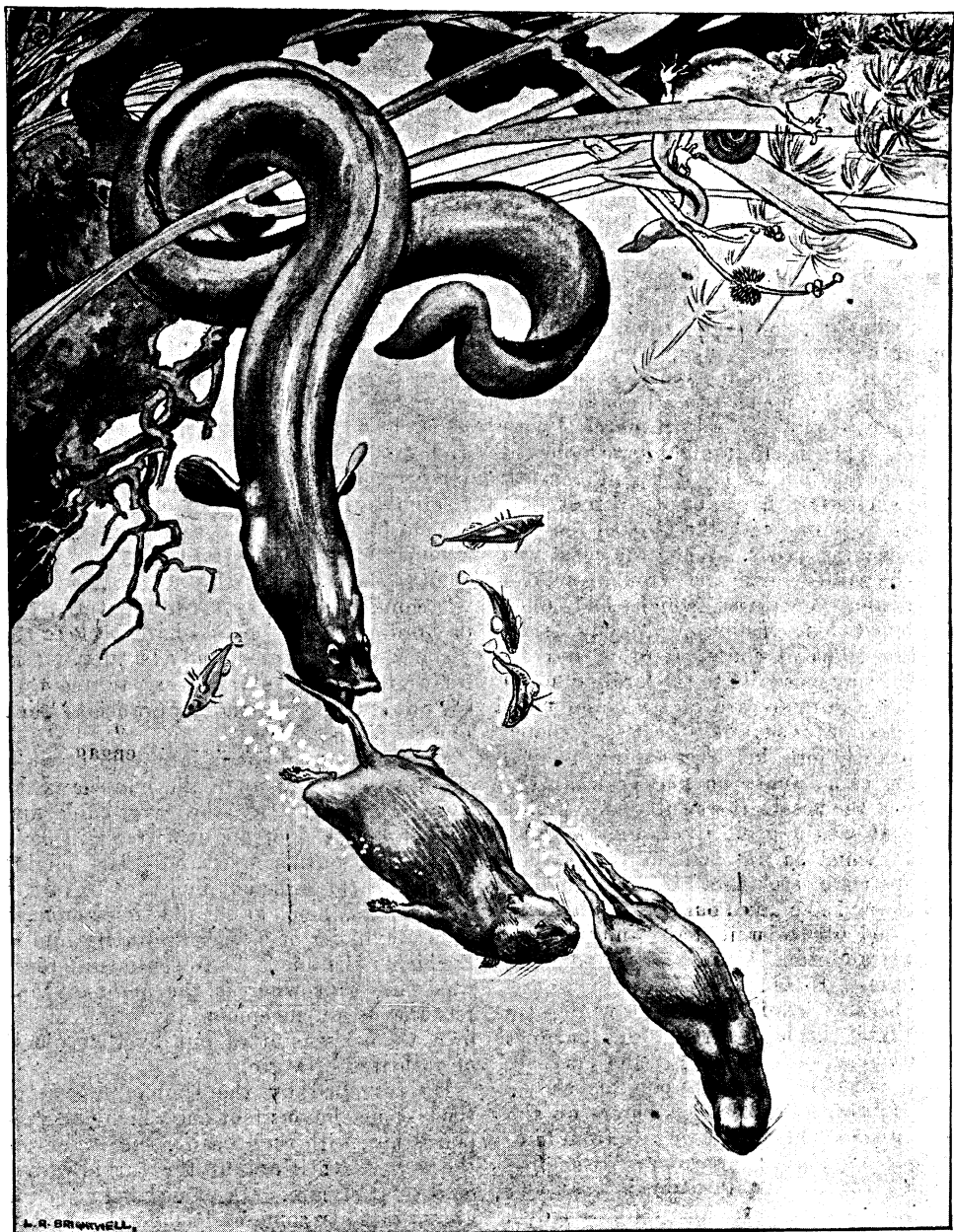
eels that had put to sea from St. Lawrence, Hudson, Chesapeake, Mississippi, Rio Grande, the Orinoco, and the Amazon, all the rivers of the New World, and now, as the life force pulsed through their transparent bodies, they made like homing pigeons for their motherlands. Some moved slowly, some quickly. As they grew they moved, and they grew in proportion as the task before them dictated. For the leaf-like atoms which headed eastward grew three times as quickly as did their fellows travelling west. They had three times as far to go. Our hero travelled with his brethren eastward. He was booked to enter the Bristol Channel in three years' time. Nature turned his little torpedo-like form towards the east, and fitted him for the tremendous voyage *en route*.

As the eel moved further and further away from the common breeding grounds of the eels of two continents, he showed a tendency to reach the "upper regions." By the time he was nearly an eighth of an inch long he had gained the exalted altitude of the "upper water layers," about a hundred and fifty fathoms from the surface. Those early days were days of rapid growth. In his first summer he put on nearly an inch and a quarter, and was presently disporting himself, together with the remains of his family party, on the surface of the sea itself. We say "remains" advisedly, for the eel had started out as one of a countless host—a single unit of a "family" which in turn was but a unit in an army of several million such families. Each hour, nay, each second, saw a thousand casualties in this host, and still it remained a host. It presently covered the upper layers of the sea-water as though it had been a submerged sheet of magically floating frosted glass a dozen yards in thickness, perhaps, and thousands of square yards in area. As time went on and the whittling of this host continued, the gregarious instinct which pervaded it became markedly apparent. Though the glass "elvers" tended to lose weight and thickness in their first year, they nevertheless gained in general development. They became more opaque, and, though still leaf-like in general shape, were unquestionably becoming more intelligent. The instinct which makes so many creatures stick together kept them moving forwards in a compact body, and though jelly-fish, swimming crab, fish, porpoise, whale and gull did their worst, the third spring saw a vast shoal of youthful eels, our hero amongst

them, heading for the coastal banks of Europe. And here the eel family, each member of which was now clearly defined as a tiny worm-like creature which might once fairly have justified the "horsehair" theory, began to break up. Some headed down the Bay of Biscay. They went to grief in half a hundred ways. Bass, mullet, tunny and squid took toll of them, yet still enough remained to make men marvel at the hosts which invaded every river mouth in Western Europe. Many, indeed, found final sanctuary in the Italian lakes. Those who, a day's steam from the Scillies, headed north, formed themselves into battalions a billion strong, each compact body heading as tide and season, all the half-known laws we sometimes carelessly call "chance," dictated. In this manner, a hapless plaything of the vast biennial movements of the Atlantic waters, *our eel*, the Mystery Fish, was forced, together with his brothers and sisters—nine-tenths of them "chummed in," so to speak, from other eel families—into the murky waters of an English tidal river. In the third year of their lives they made a looked-for entry into the country which should engage their activities for at least another fifteen years. Hatched in the Egyptian darkness at the end of the three-thousand-fathom line, our particular eel had somehow survived through all the vicissitudes that beset a baby eel making its way upwards through the indigo-tinted mid-depths, the deep blue half-way waters, and the jade green of the "surface layers." Every beast that crept or swam had been against him, and now, in the nut-brown eddies of a great tidal river, the gauntlet was redoubled rather than slackened. Crayfish grabbed at laggard brethren near the bottom; fish of all kinds took their toll of them in mid-stream; the heron and the gull swooped down upon them when, as more usually happened, they chose the surface. And above all these was man. Until the laws restrained him he took his fill of the tiny fish, and, netting them by the hundredweight, sold them to be fried by the panful as a poor man's substitute for whitebait. Yet such was the prodigality of the mother eels' sowing that many yet grew up to adult eel's estate, and our hero, a typical specimen of his race, forged his way upstream, growing apace and never ceasing to feed, save on the rare occasions when he attained repletion, or climatic conditions were against him.

He was a "yellow" eel at this time—





"He would chase them and their children into their sacred fastness, and, full fed on the tenants, claim the burrow for his own."

an eel in its fourth year, some six inches long, and of that rather murky olive-green tint known to all who ply the rod and line. His first winter he spent beneath some dock piles. He was an inconsiderable unit in a vast tangled bunch of his fellows, one twined around the other, and others yet again cross-tangled in between them, a heaving, undulating semi-globular mass of Gordian knots, an endless chain of living

links gone mad, the whole kept more or less stable by its own weight and the great weed-grown pillars surrounding it. As the cold increased, the links in this chain detached themselves one from the other and wormed their way into the mud. Here they lay half torpid. A mild day would move one link stronger than the rest to gulp down some less vigorous fellow, or to engulf, perhaps, a restless pond snail or chance



river shrimp or mud worm. But for the greater part of that first winter, mild though it was, the little eels stayed dormant. The spring saw them feverishly alert, and first to recommence the pilgrimage upstream was the eel whose fortunes we are following.

If he was hungry as a glass "elver"—the fairy-like creatures which had headed for English waters in the previous year—he was permanently insatiable now. He never knew what it was to cry "Enough!" The further he progressed upstream, the more secure he became from possible opponents, and the greater menace to all his inferiors. He began to play a "return match" with Nature. When fish that might have molested him were feeding, he lay dormant beneath some sheltering bank or tree root, his sinuous body one with the twisted roots or gently-waving weeds. When the coast was clear, he sallied forth and wrought fearful havoc upon creatures which had once threatened his existence. Mayfly larvæ and the grubs of countless other insects, from the tiny mosquito to the lordly dragon-fly, caddis worms—case of stick and stone complete—water-skaters, beetles, snails, now passed into his ever-gaping mouth. Nothing came amiss, no matter what the nature of the beast. It was all one to him—food. It was a good river, and so long as food lasted he was content to nose his way upstream, seeking all whom he might devour—and he devoured most things, living and otherwise. As he increased in size, his ambition, so to speak, increased with him. Presently a half-inch water-beetle became scarcely worth his while. He nosed into suspicious holes and burrows and dragged out the protesting crayfish, calling down anathemas upon his shovel head from aged crayfish gatherers on the banks above. Nothing was safe from him, whether moving or stationary. One fine March morning he gulped down what you or I might well have taken for a lady's scarf—a gossamery ribbon some three feet in length. In gulping down that floating scarf he hurried into an early grave some thousands of infant perch. Ten minutes later he was worrying tit-bits from a long-deceased cat wedged beneath some lock gates and swarming with fresh-water shrimps. But the shrimps were altogether beneath his notice *now*. The fourth summer saw him a very different creature from the worm-like atomy that had once entered the river mouth. He was nearly three feet long, and what anglers

term a "sharp-nosed" eel. That is our guarantee that he was really a male of his species, as opposed to the blunt-nosed or female eel.

The next summer was a momentous one for him. It was a very average summer as English summers go, ringing all the changes on our famous climate within the space of a single week. It certainly could not have been the weather that unsettled him. Cold he could abide even to the extent of being frozen in a block of mud, as on the occasion when a sudden hard frost followed close upon the tidal waters, leaving a bank in which he was, for the nonce, embedded high and dry. Heat was more trying to his temperament, at all times highly sensitive to climatic conditions. To be half baked in a mud-bank irked him to the core, for in summer his natural restlessness was at its zenith. But in his fourth year another factor was coming into play. Nature would one day ordain that he should hark back to the place whence he came, and as a preparation for that great event she was "tuning up" his powers of effort and endurance to their highest pitch.

On a clammy night in late August, when the mist hung low upon the marshland, he wormed his way up the river-bank and deliberately and of his own free will commenced to journey overland. His bulging gill-flaps held sufficient moisture to fortify him *en route*, much as the old-time aeronaut took a cylinder of oxygen to fortify him in the higher altitudes. The essential difference was this, that whereas the aeronaut had recourse to an ingenious invention of his own, the eel was fitted out by that oldest of outfitters—Nature.

He travelled by the simple process of those same sinuous motions which had propelled him with such deadly success across the wide Atlantic and up the turbid waters of a tidal stream. He passed between the grass stems like some evil shadow, and when he sensed the presence of some living thing, he checked, investigated, and, if possible, *fed*. The deadly persistency which had in river land enabled him to chase the water-rats up their underwater passages here made it easy for him to stalk and gulp down the butterfly, fast asleep upon its grass stem, or suddenly and finally to end the career of some worm-seeking toad. Few creatures care to meddle with a toad twice, but our hero had no prejudices. At dawn he was installed at the bottom of a pond some quarter of a mile from his starting-point.



He came upon it quite by chance, slithered in, found it to his liking, and so stayed there.

It was an old pond, how old we cannot say, but the water-lily roots were twice his girth, and the sedges marshalled round its margin had given shelter to the moorhen's chicks for many a year. The owner loved the self-installed birds as well as he loved the mandarin ducks and shovellers that he had bought at a West End dealer's price and fostered with infinite care and solicitude. For years the pond and all within and around it had delighted him. But a snake in the grass can scarcely be more deadly than an eel in the pond. The spring saw a disturbing change in the placid routine of that watery Utopia. A moorhen's brood, timed to hatch by mid-May, never chipped the shell. "Something" took the bottom from the nest—and the eggs with it. Promising moorhen chicks, walking unsteadily upon the broad leaves of the water-lily plants, disappeared suddenly with a shriek and a flutter. The goldfish that had made the pond gay for so many seasons went the same way, and the die-hard sticklebacks ceased to breed. They followed in the track of water-hen and goldfish ere the foundations of their nests were laid. The breadcrumbs once thrown upon the waters, to the delight of the mandarins, now disappeared before those aristocrats of the duck world had a chance to reach them. The sudden demise of a favourite duck led to plans for the expulsion of the evil-doer. Seldom more than glimpsed, but for long suspected, the source of the trouble was now proscribed. He had been fished for and missed, or else had "gone away" with the bait, and the deadly eel spear or "pilgrim" had been tried without effect. Now outraged proprietorship would stand it no longer. An exceptionally hot summer favoured the cause of right. It baked the waterside herbage to khaki-coloured tatters, and let the water down until the great pineapple-shaped stems of the lily plants were clearly visible. Once the water was out, the eel-spear could scarcely fail to find its mark. But the eel waits for no man. The pond had long since become unsatisfactory to our particular eel. He had eaten his way through most things, and the water-fowl were becoming increasingly difficult of approach. He left unobtrusively as he had come. Three miles distant, within a stone's throw of a bend in the river he had originally left before he took to the pond, he was pinned down and, after a violent struggle, got into

a sack. He bit and wriggled his way through the sacking in the course of time, but he bit too late. He fell through the bottom of the sack, not into the kindly water-meadow country he had left, but on to the cobblestones of a public highway. The game-keeper who had captured him experienced a very brisk five minutes ere assistance came; but he won eventually, and the eel, after some hours spent in a municipal water-cart, came before the public notice as a "star turn" at the local fishmonger's.

His sojourn at the local fishmonger's was, perhaps, the least interesting phase in his career. We will pass over the number of harmless romancers who claimed, in chosen company at "The Angler's Arms," to have "hooked" him, or "landed" specimens greatly exceeding his length, and he was not far off a yard, a very noteworthy length for a male eel to attain. Particularly did he exercise the mind of old Sol Wentworth, a one-time eel catcher, who told stories of how he was wont to beat a drum beside a likely stream to "make the eels run." Mr. Wentworth's natural history may have consisted in an all-unconscious grafting of his own observations upon certain traditions cherished by his forefathers, but there is no denying that the eel in the show tank was uncannily sensitive to thunderstorms. The proprietor called him his "weather-glass." Long ere the local meteorologist had sagely predicted "thunder about," the big eel left his drainpipe retreat and had commenced a restless survey of his glass-lined prison. The "thunder loach" living with some goldfish in a tiny aquarium in the back parlour was not more stirred by prospects of a coming storm, and the thunder loach has long been kept as a species of homely "weather-glass" by Continental folk. Our Mystery Fish shared a tank with some twenty fellow-eels, and the water was kept running. A river eel can ill brook still water or artificial surroundings. He was strictly rationed, being fed, like the rest, on lobworms and small roach three times a week. He was not used to rationing. One day a fellow-eel seized a roach by the head. Our eel seized it by the tail and, after a struggle, sank to rest upon the gravel floor of the tank, a roach and a fellow-eel to the good. He had engulfed a tank-mate half his own length.

An eel can travel anywhere save on the ceiling. One morning found the big eel squirming on the shop floor. He had climbed over the tank rim and been out of



water six hours, and was still as fresh as paint. A roof of strong wire netting in future kept him within bounds, until an unlucky day when the combined efforts of a faulty plug and the negligence of the shop's boy gave him his liberty, and he passed from the public eye, *via* the waste pipe, and, after many vicissitudes which only those who know the Dullborough drainage system can guess at, found himself in the sewage outflow. From thence it was merely a matter of time until he was fairly under way and heading for the sea.

In some ways his journey seawards was very like his previous travels inland. It involved the same promiscuous feeding, the same periods of ravenous and indiscriminate greed, alternating with long periods of comparative quiescence, necessitated by lack of food, excessive cold or drought. The great eel showed the same capacity as of yore for pursuing and seizing the most elusive prey, the same agility in escaping from any tight corner in which he might find himself, the same extraordinarily acute sense of hearing both beneath the water and on land. Once more he made his nightly pilgrimage over fen and ploughland, giving rise to many a tale of monster eels that deliberately attacked growing crops or even dug the seeds out from the drills. Once, indeed, he was actually turned up by the plough, and only the kindly cloak of autumn mist saved him from appearing at the farm-hand's supper table. As formerly, he left no likely stream or pond or alluring burrow uninvestigated, but with it all his movements showed a certain settled purpose, just as his outward shape was undergoing a distinct and readily appreciable change. The deep brown of his back was fast becoming greyish; the clouded olive of his under-surface was beginning to take on a silvery tint.

His journey was full of breaks. He had but one aim in view—to reach the sea, and, having reached it, to keep on until he came to the great goal of all good eels, somewhere in deep waters, close to, but utterly cut off from, the sun and gladness of the beautiful Bahamas. With every change of weather he altered his tactics. His appetite was dying fast, yet he still had moments when the old craving to gorge came upon him. It led him one day into a squaggy salt marsh where crabs hobnobbed with the "tiddlers." It was a vast waste of waving rushes, mud, and brackish water. At first glance you would have said that it

was seen by no man—just a wilderness of wild life spread beneath the eye of Heaven. But little is unsupervised to-day. The marsh—in reality a wild bird sanctuary, protected by a score of conflicting regulations and cherished by a learned band of scientists—was patrolled almost daily by a bailiff and a heron. The two inspectors were somewhat at variance. They both had stomachs to fill, but in different ways. The bailiff wore a red waistcoat that made him a mark for all with eyes to see at three miles distance. The heron wore a blue waistcoat, practically invisible to fish, which so blended with the sky above that carefully-preserved carp and tench never realised its vicinity until the blow fell from that spring-trigger neck and bill. So, one day, the bird fell upon our eel, an arrow shaft, a bolt from the blue, with all the force that a lusty young heron can put behind his thrust. It caught our eel amidships, and, the point fairly planted in a mass of muscle, the fish was hove clear of the water and nearly swallowed—nearly, but not quite. In vain the bird tried to jerk his beak clear of the eel. By the time he had freed his beak of the coveted meal, half of the eel was down his throat, and, the other half being suddenly freed, the eel wound himself around the heron's supple neck in an awful grip that did but tighten as the heron strove to free himself. Bird and fish came to the ground in a writhing heap. Thirty minutes later the eel broke free and wormed off through the grass with feathers clinging to his slimy bulk. The bird never rose. He was strangled by a meal that "might have been."

\* \* \* \* \*

The vigilance with which men had watched the eel's advent to their shores now increased a hundredfold, for was not the full-grown eel making for the sea many times the value of the little worm-like creature that had ascended from it. To a more sensitive creature that autumn journey to the sea might well have seemed alive with death-traps. But the eel was not imaginative. Deprived of brain and fins and half his body into the bargain, he might still have contrived—or, at least, would have endeavoured instinctively—to feed. He was imbued with a nervous vitality which could have still animated his quartered body for hours. Pain as we understand it was to him almost unknown. Appetite, and that dim something which we call, for want of a better name, the "life force,"



were behind his every action, and they sent him onwards past a host of dangers. Even when he was actually confronted with them face to face he utterly failed to appreciate them. All that autumn every mature eel, whether diminutive sharp-nosed male or

Swiss lakes a thousand feet and more above the sea-level, and the vast waterways of sun-baked Italy. Wherever men saw the eel with nose turned seawards, they did their best to intercept him. Every likely stream and river had its "bucks" and "eel dams," and where the eels huddled together in the muddy hollows, there the long tridents dug them out in writhing



"The eel wound himself around the heron's supple neck in an awful grip that did but tighten as the heron strove to free himself."

bulky six-foot blunt-nosed female, made, or tried to make, its tortuous passage to the sea. The same unrest which now gave so much purpose to our hero was animating millions of eels in far-distant rivers of Holland, France, Russia and Asia Minor,

bunches of a dozen at a time. "Bobbing" with worsted, and the use of lime dropped into burrows—these likewise played their parts in the massacre. In Italy the sluices, which had once been so freely opened to admit the young elvers, were now



treacherously closed, and the baffled eels were taken in their thousands, to be skinned alive, cut into pieces, and then roasted upon spits. Every country had its own ideas of how to enjoy the swarming eels, now black and pointed of fin, silvery of hue, and enriched by layer upon layer of fat, Nature's winter wear to fortify them for their last long journey across the Atlantic. Many would reach it, no doubt, but in the meantime the world clamoured for eels cooked according to its many needs. Britons fancied them fried, baked, stewed and jellied. Italians soured them in vinegar, roasted them, or fried them in fresh olive oil. Frugal Frenchmen dried them whole and put them by for future use, like bundles of fishy firewood—internal fuel, in fact. The strangest devices were used to lay hands on the fleeing eels. Superstitious old fishermen placed unbarked birch trees across the stream, believing thus to make the eel halt and be the more readily diverted into the waiting eel weir. But in spite of all the quaint devices used to arrest the eel, one fact stood out significantly—scarcely a fish was taken upon hook and line. Nature had no time to lose. She had to corral her slippery flock safely in their deep-sea pens off the Bahamas, ready for the spring spawning. There could be no dallying now. Never an eel turned aside to feed, however attractive the bait. Nature drove her flock forward as, in the sky above, she drove the flocks of winged migrants. The eels pressed on, through, under and over every obstacle, save the deceptive "free entrance, no exit" eel weirs, and though many fell by the way, enough no doubt remained to reach the distant haven in the West.

Sleek old water-rats, furtively poking their noses from the underwater entrances of their rambling burrows, could see the long black form of the eel slide past, and had no fear that he would chase them and their children into their sacred fastness, and, full fed on the tenants, claim the burrow for his own. No longer did the crayfish have additional perils to face when forced to brave the terrors of his annual moult. He lay cosily in his little cave and rested by the side of his discarded shell until sufficiently rebuilt in wind and limb to "take the road." Only very occasionally might an eel be seen resting, head and tail protruding at either end of some temporary residence which he had excavated in the river mud.

So soon as Christmas celebrations had

become a thing of yesterday, so, too, had the migrating eels—at least, so far as waterside fishermen were concerned. The eel and his fellows were on the "home stretch," the last great trek across the open sea. Ever they pressed onwards, for speed was now of vital necessity if a sufficiency of eels was to be kept to perpetuate the race. The eels had no thought of food now, though others had, and mighty mother-eels, that had spelt death to most fish in the river world, now in their turn came to an untimely end in the maw of conger, cod, skate, ground shark and other creatures of the deep seas. Few fish, however well equipped for the battle of life, can be considered altogether invincible. Our eel was no happy exception to the rule. Ere fairly clear of the Scillies, a ground-swell made him look for sanctuary. A tangled heap of half-rotten canes and seaweed seemed to offer what he sought. He wormed his way in through an inviting hole, to find himself trapped in a lobster-pot. Indeed, he was worse than trapped, for there was a half-grown conger coiled uncomfortably twice round the withy cage, and smarting not only from the irksome position, but from the entailed fast. He had been there a week.

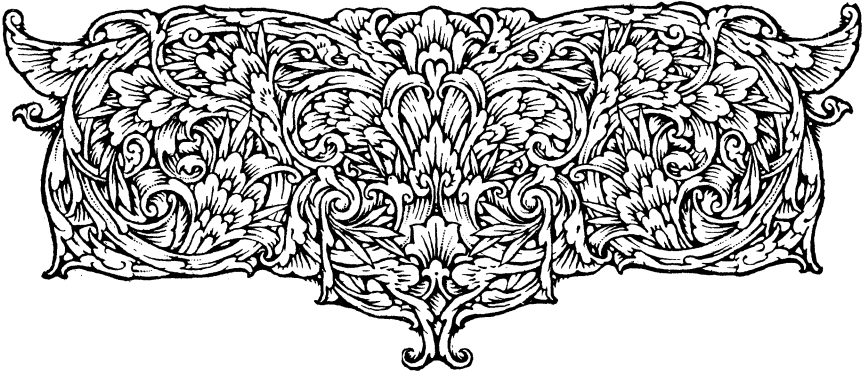
The eel's head entered the pot, and a moment later was travelling through the conger's teeth-lined jaws and down the hungry gorge. But he never reached the end of the passage. Instinctively he waved his head from side to side, and his sharp and slimy nose presently struck a wedge-shaped cleft. Now, an eel can force a passage through almost any substance more yielding than rock. As the river-eel's body vanished in the conger's gape, his head gradually reappeared at the conger's left-hand gill opening, and bit by bit squeezed itself through the crimson gill arches, and so finally out through the osier ribs of the lobster pot. Five minutes' struggling saw the tip of his tail clear, and, free but lacerated, he continued his way until the next enforced resting-place.

Ere he had reached mid-ocean he had thus suffered imprisonment and made good his escape at least a dozen times, always forcing his captor either to disgorge him or to allow him to escape by a chance thrust of his pointed nose which found the unresisting gill. But though he seemed to lead a charmed life, he was fairly clothed in rags, with split and comb-toothed fins, and sides that bore a thousand fang marks. He eventually came to grief within the ever-open mouth



of an old porpoise, rotten with disease, yet still mechanically seeking all he could succeed in swallowing. However, an eel has infinitely more vitality than the traditional cat. Our eel, ever writhing his steel-springed body, butting with his wedge-like head, and nibbling with his powerful jaws, found an exit, ate his way through stomach linings, and so emerged out into the comparative freedom of the body wall of the now deceased porpoise. A day or two later the porpoise hide yielded to the efforts of a flock of deep-sea vultures, lobsters, and the like, who, self-appointed sanitary inspectors as

they were, insisted upon "clearing up" the porpoise as it lay jammed into a fissure in some rocks. That is the last of the eel we can hope to see—even in imagination—within a day's steam of the Bishop. From that point, both in space and time, he vanished, and vanished utterly. Whether he fell a victim to some other High Toby of the Western ocean, or whether he ever reached his goal, and, if so, what he did when he reached it—that, together with a thousand other finny problems, must remain, for the time being, with all the other unsolved riddles that go to make "the great eel question."



## FAIRIES IN THE CITY.

**D**O you know the City air is  
 Full of funny little fairies?  
 There are such lots on Ludgate Hill,  
 The 'buses sometimes stand quite still,  
 While policemen watch their antics  
 And become confirmed Romantics.  
 In Barbican and Pilgrim Street  
 They dodge about beneath your feet,  
 And it's really worse than folly  
 To be bored and melancholy  
 When every day the fairies dance  
 In Minories and Petty France.  
 From their precarious perches  
 On the roofs of City churches  
 They dive upon the shiny hats  
 Of solemn gentlemen in spats,

And mock with small grimaces  
 Their set and anxious faces,  
 Intent upon one object, which  
 Is mostly getting quickly rich;  
 For the fairies think it funny  
 To want such heaps of money,  
 When bags of gold in either hand  
 Won't pay the fare to fairyland.  
 And when the City's dreaming,  
 And the restless river's gleaming  
 With scattered sparks of green and gold,  
 The fairies come in troops, I'm told—  
 From Paul's and 'Change they rally,  
 Creed Lane and Panyer Alley,  
 And dance, until the moon's forespent,  
 Around and round the Monument.

ELEANOR RENARD.



# WINDYGAP

By C. KENNETT BURROW

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

JACOB BUDIBENT, of Windygap Farm, rode fourteen stone and hated motor-cars. You could see scorn of petrol in every movement of the rein-hand, in every lift and fall of the man's body. His horse and he moved to an old and lovely rhythm; those other things hummed or hooted along the roads like nothing but themselves—machines controlled, or not controlled, by fools, or was it the machines that controlled the fools? Budibent had never, in all his life, been in a hurry. He had always ridden at a steady pace. His was the honourable title of "Yeoman"; he farmed his own land. Perhaps in Budibent's opinion it was the only title worth having. He liked to have his letters addressed "Jacob Budibent, Yeoman." "Mr." meant nothing, and "esquire" had lost all its value—a coin debased and worthless.

Near the top of the rise to Windygap he dismounted and led his horse to the crest. That was one of his habits, and he was a person of fixed habits. Change hurt him, because all change seemed to him to be for the worse.

From the narrow and tree-shaded road that had risen steadily for a couple of miles, Jacob emerged suddenly upon a prospect that made him catch his breath. To right and left ran the southern face of the North Downs, dipping down, with their foothills, to the great weald which lay, in an immense and serene placidity, in the westerling sunlight. As Budibent's eye ranged slowly from familiar point to familiar point, the whole expanse seemed to shimmer and sparkle, yet the whole effect was subdued, as might be that of embroidered vestments seen through a faint veil of incense. Autumn had just touched the woods to their first tones of gold and red and bronze, fields newly-ploughed looked, from that height, as soft as velvet, and here and there some pond or little lake flashed back the sunrays. The South Downs made an opposing

rampart; beyond that was the invisible sea. Where the road dipped from Windygap to the village of Ewstead, a few scattered houses, mainly new and opulent, sent their smoke into the still air, and farther to the right were a number of red roofs that suggested a new community. Budibent looked frowningly at these roofs.

For perhaps five minutes he stood there, bareheaded, breathing deeply, as he had done a hundred times before. Everything under his eye—except the new roofs—ministered to the man's spirit; it meant to him life, continuity, affection, reverence. It was something, it was everything, to be Budibent of Windygap.

He remounted, patted his horse's neck, and said, with immense satisfaction: "Home, Johnny Thorn."

Budibent's farm-lands began half a mile below Windygap, where the easier slopes begin. The house, a seventeenth-century building of red brick, beautifully toned, faced south, with a slight western inclination. Johnny Thorn—he had been named after an old stableman of Budibent's—turned into a short, well-kept lane, passed through a white gate that stood open, round the western end of the house, and came to a standstill before the high and rather narrow doorway. Or, rather, he pulled up beside a motor-car which occupied the inner position.

"The Squire!" said Budibent aloud. "Why the deuce couldn't he walk down? He knows I've no fancy for those things."

He dismounted, whistled, and a boy came running from the stables to take the horse. Then Jacob stretched his big limbs, shook himself, and entered Windygap farmhouse. He paused in the hall to brush a little dust from his coat and breeches, and advanced to a room on the right from which came the sound of voices. For a moment he stood with his hand on the door, and said to himself—

"Wonder what the Squire wants?" Then he turned the handle and went in.



"Glad to see you, Squire," he said. "Hope I haven't kept you waiting long—that is, if your business was with me?"

"I was in no hurry, and I assure you I've been most hospitably and agreeably entertained." The young man who rose to greet Jacob had no trace of the squire of tradition about him. He was slim, pale—though not unhealthily pale—and was carefully dressed in the manner of town. His eyes were dark, the hair almost black, the features sharply, but not ungracefully, modelled. Eustace Cottimore had only been Squire for six months.

Budibent nodded and sat down at the tea-table. His wife, a delicate little woman, but still daintily pretty, smiled at him; his daughter, Jenifer, kissed him. Jenifer was tall, slender, light of foot and hand, steady of eye and firm, though not hard, of lip. She had that golden-brown hair which is supposed to, and often does, denote impulsiveness, and her skin, too, was golden-brown, with the changing underflush of quick and wholesome blood. She adored her father, and Budibent loved her even more than Windygap Farm.

Jenifer filled a tall mug with tea and handed it to Budibent.

"Those footy little cups are no use to me," Budibent explained to his guest. "When I'm thirsty I want a drink, not a sip."

"Well, there's sense in that," Cottimore said. He noticed that the mug was of fine china—he guessed it to be old Worcester. And the table appointments were good, particularly the silver. No such silver had come to him with his squiredom; some of his ancestors had squandered. The Budibents had been generous, but never reckless. The room contained furniture, too, that appealed to the young Squire's trained taste—a Jacobean sideboard in particular. He had often been in the house before, but, so far as he could remember, he had never broken bread there, never become one of the domestic circle. Jenifer, in those intimate surroundings, revealed herself to him as a different person from her who rode as well as her father, but with a finer and more impetuous grace.

"Miss Budibent has been reproving me," said Cottimore.

"She sometimes reproves me."

A curious sense of constraint developed, as it were, like a chilly mist. Jenifer rose and rang the bell.

"If you can give me a few minutes, Budibent, I'd like to have a word with you."

"Come to my room," Jacob said. The new Squire made his farewells and followed Budibent to a kind of office-study which contained books other than ledgers and a safe. The failing light wavered to the slow movements of branches outside the window.

"As a near neighbour and friend," Cottimore said, "I thought it right to come to you first with my news."

"Is it about the estate?" Budibent asked, frowning.

"Then you've heard rumours?"

"Yes, but I didn't believe them, Squire. If I believed all I heard——"

"Quite so," said Cottimore. "To put it shortly, I've decided to sell. Was that what you heard?"

"Yes. But," Budibent repeated doggedly, "I didn't believe it, and I can hardly believe it now."

"Of course," Cottimore said apologetically, "I knew that you wouldn't like the idea."

Jacob went to the window, stared into the branches of the tree, then turned and looked straight at the new Squire. "Like it?" he said. "I hate it. I can't understand it."

"You would if you knew the incumbrances on the estate and the price I've been offered."

"I'd as soon sell my soul as my land," Budibent said. "As long as the place gave me food and shelter I'd stand by it as it has stood by those of my name for generations. Land's a living thing, Squire."

"I admire that point of view, but can't it be carried too far? You see, I've had very little to do with the land; I don't know much about it."

"All the same," said Budibent, "the Cottimores have owned and lived at Windygap Hall for longer than my lot have owned Windygap Farm."

"But your lot, I imagine," said the Squire, smiling, "have made the farm pay, and my lot, particularly my revered grandfather, made rather a mess of the estate. I could keep the place on—I shouldn't starve—but I shouldn't be living the kind of life I want to live."

"And what's that, Squire?" Budibent demanded.

"Well, my turn of mind's mechanical. I love machinery. I've a chance of going into a motor-car concern."

"Gad!" cried Jacob. "You'd leave the land for that trash?"

"Why not?"



"I'm not much good at reasons," said Budibent, sitting down and gazing at Cottimore with penetrating eyes, "but I can see 'why not.' A good tradition broken, an old name gone. You're the last of the Cottimores, Squire—do you grasp that?"

"At present I am, but there may be another."

"Suppose you have a son—what will you say to him about it? Would he like to hear that you sold Windygap Hall estate, the Cottimore land, for strangers to build on, and went off yourself to make money out of motor-cars?"

"I'm sure I don't know what he'd like to hear," Cottimore said rather irritably. "I suppose I'm not a good Cottimore, and 'favour' my mother, as the people say. She was never keen, you remember, on Windygap." There was an embarrassed pause. The ebbing light was withdrawing before the invading shadows.

"And what about the column on Randolph's Knoll, Squire? Will you sell that with the rest?"

Cottimore started; he had forgotten that column, erected during the Civil War, in which Randolph Cottimore died for the king. There was a tradition that so long as that slender column stood, the Cottimores would have and hold the lands of Windygap, but if it fell or was removed, fortune would desert the house and name.

"I'm not superstitious," the young Squire said, "but still I could arrange for the column to remain."

"It would be a standing reproach to you even though you never saw it again. Better have it taken down, Squire. It might be some use then," Budibent spoke bitterly.

"I'm sorry," said the other, rising, "that you take this so badly, Budibent. But a man must go his own way. He can't be controlled by dead men's hands."

Jacob also rose. "Well, I'll say no more," he said. "Perhaps I've said too much. Being a free man, perhaps I speak my mind too freely. By the way, was it about this affair that Jenifer reproved you?"

"Yes. I just hinted at the possibility, and she said I ought not to think of such a thing."

"Ah!" said Jacob. "Where she couldn't persuade, what chance have I?"

"She didn't try to persuade," Cottimore said.

Budibent saw him to the door, watched him get into the despised motor-car, and waited till its hum faded away. Then he

returned gloomily to his room, where, a few minutes later, Jenifer found him.

"What's wrong?" she asked, resting a hand on his broad shoulder.

"That young fool's going to sell," he said.

"Has he quite made up his mind?"

"It looks like it."

"If he does, you'll be the real squire," Jenifer said.

"Yeoman's good enough for me, child."

Jenifer understood precisely her father's feelings, and to some extent, being loyal of heart, she shared them. But she could not condemn so completely as he. She had no magnificent visions of a larger life—she was content, or as contented as it was possible for youth to be, with her lot—but she realised that Cottimore might, in selling, be committing no crime; he might, indeed, be fulfilling a larger destiny. She had sympathy for both points of view, and though, like Budibent, she preferred horses to motor-cars, she did not regard motor-cars with hatred and derision. But she did not commit herself to the hopeless task of defending Cottimore to her father. She herself was doubtful as to the balance of her own feelings. At any rate, the Squire who proposed to rid himself of squiredom did not strike her as an unheroic figure, to be ruthlessly condemned.

## II.

For some days Budibent went about with so disconsolate an air that one might have imagined he was on the point of being ejected from his own possessions. He looked up at the slim column on Randolph's Knoll as though appealing to it for inspiration. Many estates, large and small, thereabouts had changed hands recently, but they had mainly belonged to comparatively "new" people and he had not troubled his head about them. Windygap presented an altogether different case. The Cottimores and the Budibents were the sole survivors in that part of the county of the really old; they were like a bulwark resisting the modern flood. It appalled him that a Cottimore should voluntarily surrender.

One afternoon he rode up to Windygap Hall. The Squire, in his shirt-sleeves, was busy at a lathe in a workshop that had once been a stable.

Cottimore greeted him cordially. "This, you see, is my sort of job," he said.

"Wouldn't it do as a plaything?"

"It might," the other admitted, "but I don't think it will."



"See here, Squire," said Budibent earnestly. "I've been thinking over what you said. You don't know much about the land, you say, nor about business affairs either, I guess."

"I don't."

"Well, I do. Let me act as your bailiff, your honorary bailiff, and I'll make things hum. There's more money to be got out of this estate than you'd ever get out of it."

"By grinding the faces of the poor?"

"No, no, by fair dealing and no humbug."

"This is a very generous offer, Budibent, and I thank you for it from my heart. But I can't accept it."

"Why not?" Budibent pleaded. "A little extra work would do me no harm. In Heaven's name, hold on to the old place, Squire!"

"I'm afraid it's too late; I can't very well draw back now."

"But you'll think it over again? Don't do in a hurry what you might be sorry for all your life. You're a young man; you can afford to wait a bit."

"I promise you, old friend," said Cottimore, deeply moved, "to think it over again."

There was a little comfort in that, but it amounted to so very little that Budibent, as he rode sorrowfully away, said to himself: "Yes, he'll think it over, but he won't be strong enough to stand up against the money and those machines."

In the evening Budibent dropped in to see Johnny Thorn, the old stableman after whom his favourite saddle-horse was named. Johnny lived alone in a cottage at the end of the main orchard. He had all his meals in the kitchen of the farm; the cottage was little more than his resting-place. Yet he kept it as scrupulously neat and furnished as it had been when his wife was alive, because, he said, "If she chanced to see it from where's she's gone, she'd be glad to find no change. A man can't be too partic'ler about the dead."

The embers of the fading sunset were hidden by the farm buildings as Budibent approached Johnny's cottage, but he paused on the threshold to gaze at a faint, reflected glow in the east which seemed to pulsate as with the slow breathings of a divinity asleep. Then he knocked lightly on the door, raised the latch, and entered. At the same moment the sudden spurt of a match-flame revealed Johnny's face, the expression rapt and intent. The match went out.

"That you, master? Come along in, sir.

'Twas in my mind you'd be here to-night. Matches ain't what they were—takes two, or maybe three, to light a lamp these days. Nothin's so good as 'twas." He struck another match and succeeded in lighting a small paraffin lamp. "Ah, that's better," he said. "Sit 'ee down, master. You know the wife's old chair."

Budibent sat down and Johnny Thorn took the chair facing him.

"Like a bit o' fire, master? 'Tis ready laid."

"No, no, Johnny. I'm a warm-blooded man, and perhaps you'd say a bit warm-tempered."

"They goes together. 'Tis the way of Providence. But nobody'd accuse you of doin' anything' wrong in anger."

"Johnny, old friend—" Budibent paused, though perhaps he did not know precisely why.

"That's good, master—'old friend'—I like that."

"Well, Johnny, it's the truth. We understand each other, and some of the fools round here don't understand anything at all. . . . The young Squire, for instance—"

"Is what they've bin sayin' true?"

"I'm afraid so," Budibent said. "I've done my best to persuade him against it, but he means to sell."

"Then the devil take un—an' he will, for sure! Money taken by a Cottimore for Cottimore land'll turn into whips o' scorpions. Me an' mine have allus worked for Cottimores or Budibents, time out o' mind."

"But, Johnny, hasn't a man the right to do what he likes with his own?"

"Would you sell Windygap Farm, master?"

"Not for the world. But haven't I the right to?"

"The right to, maybe, but you daren't, with all those dead Budibents pullin' you back."

"Oh, if you dare me to do a thing, I'm the man to go right away and do it!"

"But not that, master," said Johnny Thorn, with entire composure.

"No, not that," Budibent said, smiling with a kind of earnest content. The two men, so different in all respects save for a common passion for tradition and the land, looked at each other, and each seemed to see in his companion's eyes a lurking question.

"'Tis senseless an' out o' reason for the Squire to turn over the Hall an' lands to



strangers. What'd they understand? An' how 'bout Randolph's Knoll and that old ancient column? Will he sell that, too?"

"He could arrange to leave that, he says. And, anyway, he reckons not to believe in things of that kind—superstition, he calls it."

"So that's his word for it!" said Johnny, with a fine scorn. "What'd he say, think 'ee, if the column fell?"

"I guess he wouldn't like it overmuch. But it isn't likely to fall, Johnny."

"Then you misbelieve the old story, master?"

"I believe the story," Budibent said rather uneasily, and again the two men eyed each other questioningly. "Well, Johnny, it's past your bed-time, so I'll go. I see you keep the old place as neat as ever."

"Must," said Johnny, "seein' 'tis my

belief that the missis ain't far away. A man wouldn't wish to hurt the dead."

Budibent said nothing to Jenifer of this visit to Johnny Thorn, though he might have had some difficulty in giving a reason. But she knew that he had been to the cottage because, glancing from her bedroom window, she had seen him standing for a



"'Yes, father!'"



moment in the lighted doorway. She, too, was silent, and for a reason as obscure as his.

practical knowledge of estate affairs? Yet, when he thought of Budibent and of his offer, he was ashamed. Jacob Budibent, yeoman, was a better man than he, a more true and faithful inheritor of that countryside.

One afternoon, a



"Up with that again, Squire!" he said. "Windygap—to have and to hold . . . Jenifer—"

Cottimore still hesitated, or, rather, he played with the idea of hesitation, and that meant delay. He found himself taking a deeper interest in Windygap Hall, its pleasant acres and its scattered farms. He realised that it would, after all, be more of a wrench to surrender all that than he had at first imagined; but what was a man to do with an encumbered estate and no

clear and golden afternoon in mid-October, he walked up to the tumulus-like excrescence called Randolph's Knoll, and there, on the side opposite the way of his approach, he found Jenifer. She was looking at the column with, he fancied, a kind of wistful anxiety. When she saw him she started violently.

"I'm afraid I startled you," he said.

"You did—a little. One so seldom sees anyone up here."

"I've been up several times lately," he said, smiling, "just to see that the column is all right."



"You shouldn't jest about that tradition of the Luck of Cottimore."

"I didn't mean to jest. I'm not sure that I'm not beginning to believe that there may be something in it."

"Will that influence you about the sale?"

"I don't think so. It's the tradition that I'm disposed to believe in, not in the prophecy. Do you believe in it?"

"Not altogether," she said hesitatingly, "but still——"

"There may be something in it?"

"Yes, there may," Cottimore, alone with Jenifer before that strange memorial, was impressed by her words. But he was still more impressed by the girl herself; she seemed like the spirit of the place, a spirit incarnate in youth and loveliness and slender, splendid strength. She was part of it all—of Windygap, of the glimmering weald, of the whole range of the Downs. He felt a sudden sense of sacredness, as though he stood in the presence of something even higher than virginal womanhood. After a long silence he said:

"Do you blame me as absolutely as your father does?"

"No, I can't. I can understand your point of view."

"And you sympathise with it?"

She hesitated for a moment and then said very quietly: "To be quite honest, I suppose I must say yes."

"I'm grateful for that." Cottimore walked with her to the gate of Windygap Farm and there left her. He realised that it would not be an altogether easy matter to content himself with only memories of Jenifer.

Jenifer went to her bedroom and looked out of the window towards Johnny Thorn's cottage. Her pulse beat quickly, her lips were compressed. She was excited and she was also afraid. Her quick eyes had detected that some of the turf at the foot of the column had been carefully cut and as carefully replaced. Something was wrong. She stared at Johnny's door as though it hid some secret. Then her hand went to her breast and she gave a little stifled moan. Was it possible that her father—— She put the thought from her, but it returned. There had been that visit to Johnny of which he had not spoken; she knew the intensity of his feeling about the Cottimore affair; such a man might get fantastic, dangerous ideas into his head.

The rest of that afternoon and evening

remained in Jenifer's memory as hours detached from her life. They seemed to have no relation to the present; they were like a prolonged moment in which she held her breath. Yet her faculties were alert, and she told Budibent of her visit to the Knoll, watching him as she spoke. His face betrayed nothing.

She retired early, but not to sleep. Instead, she put on a warm coat, extinguished the light, and sat by the open window to watch Johnny Thorn's cottage. The moon, three days from the full, mounted slowly, drowning in her silver radiance the golden glitter of the stars. Shadows of trees and buildings were like black velvet; leaves fell straight from twigs to earth in the windless air. The stillness was so profound, so full of mystery, that it excited rather than soothed her imagination. It was as though it waited for the reality of a human voice, a human cry.

The door of the cottage opened and Johnny stepped into the moonlight. In one hand he carried something, but Jenifer could not make out what it was. The old man crossed the rick-yard noiselessly and went in the direction of a small side-gate that gave upon the main road. Almost facing it was a stile, and beyond that a public way that led to within a hundred yards of Randolph's Knoll.

Jenifer's mind became perfectly clear, her self-possession returned. She waited for perhaps ten minutes, listening intently. The house was as still as the outer silence. She slipped downstairs, opened the back door without any jarring noise—Budibent's bolts and locks were always kept well-oiled—and took the direction which Thorn had taken. She did not hurry; there was no need to attempt to keep him in sight. If she did not find him at the Knoll, his expedition was of no moment to her. He might have taken a curious fancy for setting rabbit snares at night. But she did find him at the Knoll. He was on his knees at the foot of the column.

His back was towards her, and she stood watching the toad-like, crouching figure with a desperate fascination. He had removed the turf and his arms were buried to the elbows in the cavity which it had concealed. A faint glimmer of light, searching upward, indicated that Johnny was not working in the dark. She heard the sound of careful, light hammering, scraping, the gritting of a withdrawn chisel.

"Johnny," she said, "Johnny!"



He jerked himself up and sat back on his haunches. "Who said 'Johnny'?"

Jenifer moved forward a pace or two and looked down at him; the moonlight was on her face.

"Why, 'tis Miss Jenifer!" he said. The stubborn, dogged expression, as of one found out and prepared to take the consequences, gave place to one of kindly appreciation. "So you've come to see how I be gettin' on," he said. "How did you know what I was 'bout?"

"I didn't know. I've come to find out. I saw this afternoon that the turf had been moved and put back again."

"You allus had sharp eyes, Miss Jenifer. I've a'most finished now. Come a good wind from the north-east, tearin' through the gap, an' I reckon this little old monument'll crash down like a tree."

Jenifer stood staring at him, wide-eyed. "You talk of this wickedness as if it were something good," she said.

"Wickedness? The wickedness is young Squire's, to sell the Cottimore land."

"But he hasn't sold it yet."

"Ah! Maybe he'll think better of it when ole Randolph speaks. A man should never go agin' the dead, Miss Jenifer; they'll reach out from where they be an' strike un down."

"You're talking nonsense, Johnnry. If the column falls, it will be your work. What have the dead to do with it?"

"'Twas they that put the notion into my head," Johnny said. "How else would it have come there?"

Jenifer breathed sharply; her purpose wavered for an instant. Then she said: "Are you sure, Johnny, that no living person put it into your head?"

"Certain sure," Johnny said, "but there's one that wouldn't blame me—wouldn't call it wickedness, same as you did, Miss Jenifer." The old man's eyes challenged hers.

"You mean my father?"

"That's right—Jacob Budibent, of Windygap Farm."

"He would blame you, Johnny." The words were breathed rather than spoken, as though she herself was not fully assured of their truth. "I know he hates the idea of Mr. Cottimore selling, but he wouldn't try to frighten him out of it by a dishonourable trick." Her voice became clearer and firmer as she went on: "You must stop this wicked work, Johnny. You must promise me to put it right again. You haven't thought enough about it. Suppose

the column did fall, wouldn't it be plain to Mr. Cottimore, or anyone with eyes, that it had been tampered with? The dead don't work with hammers and chisels." Johnny rose slowly to his feet after closing the shutter of his small dark-lantern.

"Gosh!" he said dejectedly. "I never gave a thought to that. But maybe no one'd notice it."

"Do you think Mr. Cottimore's a fool?" she demanded.

"No, he's no fool, Miss Jenifer, barrin' this madness o' sellin' the ole house an' land."

"Then, Johnny Thorn, it seems to me that if you don't put right what you've put wrong, you've run your head into a trap."

"How's that? Who's to know 'twas I did it?"

"I know," said Jenifer.

The old man gasped. "But you wouldn't go to give me away, Miss Jenifer!"

"I might have to. Suppose suspicion fell on some innocent person. What then?"

"I'd own up," he said.

"I believe you would. You're no coward, Johnny, and yet what you've been doing is cowardly. You weren't prompted by the dead, but by the devil. Swear to me that you'll repair the damage you've done."

Johnny seemed to shrink into himself, to grow smaller, as though his baulked purpose had been transformed into a visible stroke of age. "All that work for nothin'," he muttered, "night after night, wet or fine! I'll do my best, Miss Jenifer, but 'tis easier to put a thing wrong than to set it right again."

"You can do it—I'm sure you can do it. You must begin to-morrow night. I'm sorry for you, Johnny. I won't think too hardly of you for this."

He knelt again at the foot of the column and shovelled a pile of loose earth into the hole with his hands. Then he carefully replaced the sods. Rising at last, he looked at the girl piteously. "Miss Jenifer, Miss Jenifer!" he said.

### III.

COTTIMORE pushed his chair back from the writing-table, rose, stretched himself, and then began to pace the room. Should he, or should he not, sign the document that lay on the table? To sign it would be a kind of abdication, at a price, as though a monarch should resign his kingdom for gold. Not to sign it would be to retain a kingdom that he believed himself to be incapable of governing, and with small reserve in the



treasury. A month ago he had been quite clear about it—the Windygap estate must go, and the name of Cottimore become a fading tradition. Now he was not so clear. Budibent's appeal had moved him, and he had discovered in himself a deeper sentiment for the place than he had imagined to exist. In the home of his forefathers, surrounded by their possessions and by what their eyes had seen and their souls had loved, he could not escape the appeal of the past. Then there was Jenifer, whose appeal was so vitally of the present.

A venerable grandfather's clock, after strange preliminary gurglings, struck eleven. He paused before it and gazed at the dial as though it might reveal to him something more than the resistless flow of time. The wind, which had fallen a little at sunset, had risen again, and was now blowing half a gale. The sweep and cry of it came to him with a sense of vastness, of portentousness. Even so, he thought, had the wind blown over the Cottimore land for generation after generation, and so it would blow when the name of Cottimore was forgotten of living men.

He returned to the writing-table and took up a pen. But almost immediately he laid it down again, folded the document, put it into a drawer and turned the key. His irresolution annoyed him. He was restless, a little excited—he remembered that, as a child, wind had always affected him in that way. Sleep seemed impossible; perhaps he could walk off the mood.

The wind, from the north-east, rushing through the gap as through a tunnel, swooped down on him as he turned towards Randolph's Knoll. In the moment of indecision he felt drawn to that strange memorial. The moon was full, now obscured by racing clouds, now serenely clear and still above the tumultuous earth. At one moment he saw the column clearly, the next it was hidden in a wave of shadow. As Cottimore buffeted his way towards it, he seemed to feel a personal menace in the wind, as though it were trying to keep him from his own.

He reached the Knoll half breathless and stood, leaning heavily on his stick, gazing upward at the column, so that he did not notice a slight movement of something darker than a shadow on the ground to his right. Did that column really mean more than a mere memorial? Was it possible that the dead could control insensate things, or could living hands impart to

their work a sense of memory, fulfilment, revelation?

A sudden increase in the wind's pressure forced him a pace backward, but still he kept his eyes upon the column. It seemed to tremble from base to summit; there was a gritting and rending sound; he saw it toppling forward. Instinctively he moved to the left, but his fascinated gaze did not leave the falling memorial until it crashed to earth within a few feet of him.

He heard something like a moan—but that might only have been a trick of imagination—and then an unmistakable human cry. At the same moment he became aware of a figure that, as he looked, turned and fled. He started in pursuit, battling fiercely against the wind. His mind was in a tumult, as though it had become part of the element that opposed him. He could not think; he was conscious only of awe that hovered on the brink of fear, of a strange exaltation of spirit, and of the excitement of the chase. He gained rapidly on his quarry, which took the direction of Windygap Farm. He drew close enough to see that it was a woman. Her footsteps faltered as she reached the stile. There she turned and faced him.

"Jenifer!"

She struggled for breath, one hand against her throat, the other clutching one of the uprights of the stile. Her eyes had the piteous look of a dog's in pain.

"So you, too," Cottimore said, trying to speak lightly, "were in at the death of the Luck."

"It isn't dead," she said, the words coming out in jerks. "I mean—it wasn't Fate that did it—it wasn't the dead. It means—nothing. I'm sure it doesn't."

"It's good of you to try to comfort me," he said. He glanced back at the Knoll. "No, it wasn't a dream—the column's gone. Or perhaps it's a dream still." He turned again to the girl. "Are *you* real, Jenifer?" Her eyes were closed, her face white as the fallen column in the moonlight.

"The wind, the wind!" she murmured. "The wind from the north-east!" She shivered and drooped. Cottimore thought she was on the point of collapse and, setting his back against the stile, supported her.

But she braced herself and stood erect. "You must put it up again," she said. "Promise me that."

"Yes, I promise that."

"And then forget that it ever fell. Oh, it was wicked, wicked!" He was completely bewildered, but unexpectedly,



strangely content. Every word she spoke seemed to reveal her heart to him.

"To-night," he said, "I hesitated before signing away Windygap. I did not sign it away, now I never shall. My mind is made up. It will still be Budibent and Cottimore at Windygap." She looked at him long and steadily, and under that unflinching regard he felt like a man who at the last moment has been saved from treachery to his own blood. "Does this," he asked "make you happier?"

"Yes, yes. And my father——" She did not finish the sentence.

Cottimore left her at the back door of the farm and returned by way of Randolph's Knoll. The wind had decreased in violence, and the sky was now almost clear of clouds. Suddenly, before reaching the rise of the Knoll, he paused at a thought that stung his mind. Could Jenifer herself have in some way been responsible for the falling of the column? Even if she had, it showed at least a flattering interest in him, and, still more so, her too late repentance. He dismissed, however, the idea of any direct complicity on her part, and his thoughts turned to Jacob Budibent. A man like Budibent, he reflected, was almost capable of considering it a moral duty to do a dishonourable act which might either save the Cottimore honour or punish the man whom he conceived to be its betrayer. There was something so direct, so simple in the idea, that it seemed to fit in with one side of Budibent's character. And yet it involved an absurdity which Budibent, in his senses, could not fail to see. It was clear, at any rate, that Jenifer knew more than she had told.

Cottimore reached the summit of the Knoll. The prone column, white in the moonrays, had an air of desolation and degradation. It was as though the fall had destroyed some inner life in the memorial, a life not understood by man. Moving towards its tapering end, he saw something dark upon the ground, something that stirred and moaned and muttered. Cottimore dropped to his knees.

"Johnny Thorn!" he said.

"That's right. 'Tis Johnny Thorn. Miss Jenifer said 'twas wickedness, an' now it's got me by the leg." He managed to lift his head and gazed wistfully at Cottimore. "Squire, I done it. Night after night, hammer and chisel. . . . Miss Jenifer found it out, but I couldn't put right what I'd put wrong."

"Never mind, Johnny—it's all right now. I'll go for help."

"Me leg's gone, for sure," Johnny moaned. "When I saw you, Squire, I fell flat so's you'd maybe not notice me, an' that ole column aimed straight for me."

Cottimore hurried to the Hall, not to the farm, roused the household, and returned with the necessary help. A doctor, who had established himself close at hand to cultivate a practice among the "new" people, was sent for, and by the time Johnny Thorn had been freed and carried to the Hall everything was ready for him. On the way he spoke only once.

"This ben't the way to Windygap Farm," he said to Cottimore, who walked beside the bearers.

"No. You're to be my guest, Johnny. We mustn't disturb Miss Jenifer."

Cottimore, in the remaining hours of darkness, slept little, but either sleeping or waking found himself on the Knoll again, heard Jenifer's cry, and once more took up the pursuit. He rose soon after daylight and went out. The world was quiet as a sleeping child, as innocently lovely as a dream of love timid of its own fruition. The colours of autumn took his eye like the banners of an innumerable but silent army.

Cottimore again mounted to Randolph's Knoll and examined the base of the column. At the point of fracture the marks of Johnny Thorn's chisel were plain; moreover, the cavity was now disclosed, and the loose turf was scattered about it. Cottimore stood there pondering. Had this work been the old man's own idea?

He turned to look towards Windygap Farm and saw Budibent approaching. He did not advance to meet him; he waited, ashamed of his suspicion, and conscious of something like reverence for the man whom he suspected.

"Jenifer has told me all about it," Budibent said.

"Not everything. Johnny Thorn was up here, too, last night. When the column fell, it pinned him by the leg—he'd thrown himself flat on the ground to escape being seen by me. I found him when I returned this way. He confessed that he'd been tampering with the column. I had him carried to the Hall, and he's there now. I can't understand what put the notion into the old man's head."

"You think it might have been me, Squire? Perhaps it was."



Cottimore was taken aback ; the blood rushed to his face, ebbcd, and left him pale.

"I didn't do it directly," Budibent went on, "I never said a word about it, but, all the same, I may be partly responsible. You know Johnny's faithfulness to the Cottimores and Budibents ; all his people, for generations, have been part of both of us. One evening I went to his cottage and told him that you were going to sell. He was more angry than I was. We talked about the column and the old story, and it came into my mind that what has happened might be made to happen. I thought, in a mad moment, that Johnny and I could easily manage it between us. I looked at him in a sort of questioning way, and he looked at me the same way. . . . Could my thought have passed over to him ? I've heard of such things."

"Yes, it's quite possible," Cottimore said. "Sometimes people who are in intense sympathy can read each other's thoughts, even at a distance."

"Then Johnny read my mad thought, and the blame's mine, Squire."

"Nonsense, man ! Don't get that idea into your head. And, anyway, it doesn't matter. The column's going up again and I've decided not to sell. There's my hand on it."

Budibent hesitated. "You won't have Johnny punished ?"

"Good Heavens, no ! He's been punished

enough already. He'll probably lose his leg."

Budibent stood staring at the fallen column. "Poor Johnny !" he said. "So you're going to hold on to Windygap, Squire ?"

"Yes. I shall cry off the deal and pay a forfeit. I'm grateful to Johnny, Budibent, and to you as well."

Budibent shook his head. "You mean kindly," he said, "but"—pointing to the column—"grateful seems a queer word for that."

"But it's the right word. You see, if it hadn't been for Johnny's work, your daughter—Jenifer—wouldn't have been up here in the gale last night. I found my soul last night. I became a real Cottimore. There's nothing now but Windygap and—Jenifer."

For some time Budibent was silent. Then he said : "She was a bit wild last night, and said things that scared me. I saw what it meant, and I tell you I was afraid. But if it's to be Windygap and Jenifer, Cottimore and Budibent. . . ." His gaze ranged over the many-coloured weald, swept right and left along the glittering slopes of the Downs, and returned to the fallen column. "Up with that again, Squire !" he said. "Windygap—to have and to hold. . . . You refused to have me for your bailiff once, but you'll have to now. Jenifer——"

"Yes, father !"

She stood beside them.

## THE ANNIVERSARY.

**I** WOULD not that my love should haunt your ways,  
Inseparable as saltness from the sea ;

**I** would not have my sorrows vex your days ;  
Believe nought else, but only that, of me.

**I** would not have you shed for me one tear,  
Nor grieve the dropping-time of one small grain :

**I** would but have you, this one day each year,  
Remember the beginning of your reign.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.





"How kind of you to call upon me like this!" she said . . . "I'm awfully sorry we can't get up to receive you," apologised Alan, "but you see how it is."

# THE JILTED LADY

By ALICE GRANT ROSMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

"WHY, the Jilted Lady must have come home!" said Eve in wonder. She had paused to look at the old grey house, so long shuttered and cold, but now winking a dozen friendly yellow eyes at them in the winter dusk.

Alan, however, indignantly hurried her on. "I don't like it," he said with melancholy. "I don't like it at all, this talk of jilted ladies and gentlemen. It's not nice."

Eve laughed.

"It has a jolly sinister sound, if you ask me," he continued darkly. "Oh, it's all very well for you—you may laugh. You'll never be a jilted lady, but what about me? At any moment you may wake up and say: 'Why should I marry that ugly brute?' Eve, darling, you do love me, don't you?"

"Certainly not," said Eve sensibly.

"That's why I'm taking you home as fast as I can go, to put it in *The Times*."

"Won't *The Times* look jolly with us in it?" exulted Alan. "Don't you think we ought to ring 'em up and advise 'em to print a very large edition?"

"Well, as Aunt Dora has been fussing because she didn't know all your names," said Eve, "and all your father's——"

"Oh, I can tell her those," declared Alan, with pride, "every one of 'em, and when I was born, and when I had the measles. I'm sure *The Times* would simply love to know about the measles—aren't you? I say, we're there. Eve, darling, hold my hand!"

Eve held it, and they laughed together as they hurried up the drive to face the alien tribunal of the family.

To do them justice, the family would have



been deeply hurt at the suggestion that they could be alien to anything concerning the happiness of Eve, their orphaned niece. The Hallidays were bulwarks of the nation—just and kindly bulwarks, who did their duty in that state of life, etc., with cheerful rectitude. Unfortunately, they were just a little too old-fashioned to realise that anything so solemn as a duty may sometimes also be a pleasure.

They had brought up Eve with their own children, loved her dearly, and faithfully shielded her from any knowledge of what they were convinced was her dark inheritance; but they looked for signs of it, of course, and now that Eve had arrived at young womanhood, slim, clear-eyed, lovely, but, in spite of their careful training, impetuous and outspoken still, they shook their heads over her and feared it was "the taint."

"My dear," Aunt Dora had been saying to Uncle Richard this evening, "I am very much afraid our little Eve is just a trifle hard. It is time she *knew*."

"Yes, yes," said Uncle Richard, who always spoke quickly and with decision to hide the fact that he was in doubt. "Better take time by the forelock, my dear. No time like the present. It's an ill wind, perhaps——"

At this his son and daughter, sitting demurely in the background, kicked each other.

"Give a dog a bad name and you might as well slang him," intoned Roger.

"All that glitters is not guilt," responded Madge.

"What's that? What's that?" exclaimed Mr. Halliday.

"We were just wondering how much longer Eve and Alan were going to be, father."

"Well, well! Patience is a virtue. Patience is a virtue."

As if to disprove this, the door burst open tempestuously, and Eve and Alan came in, the tall girl with bright, wind-blown cheeks and hair, and the taller, dark young man.

"Here we are," said Eve, and there would have seemed almost a wistful appeal in the unnecessary statement to anyone less intent upon her duty than Aunt Dora.

The girl was rather like a flower, a vivid, lovely thing, lighting the dim old room, but Mrs. Halliday never quite approved this quality in her niece. She was so much afraid it wasn't really nice.

"I'm glad, dear," she said gently. Gentleness, she believed, had a sweet, restraining influence on the young. "How do you do, Alan? Now, I'm afraid I have a little disappointment for you both, but I know you will bear it bravely"—which meant, of course, that she was certain they would do nothing of the kind.

"Oh, what is it?" begged Eve, in sudden fear. She knew her Aunt Dora.

"Now, now," said Uncle Richard, "don't cross your bridges till you come to them, my dear. Don't cross your bridges."

"You cross your fingers, old girl," advised Roger in a stage whisper.

"Roger! Madge! Leave us, please," requested their mother magisterially, and Eve saw those friendly allies obey with a sinking heart.

They left the billiard-room door slightly ajar, however, not from deliberate dishonesty, but because Eve's quarrels were their own, and it might be necessary to cheer her by an occasional grimace at the back of authority.

"Is—is something the matter?" faltered Eve.

Aunt Dora sighed and looked very sad indeed. "Your poor Aunt Helen is at Greenridges, Eve," she said.

"Oh," breathed Eve to Alan, "the Jilted Lady!" and wondered why she had always felt there was something strange about this. She had been threatened with the Jilted Lady in her nursery days, and did not know that Aunt Dora, discovering as much, had dismissed the servant responsible forthwith.

"But she isn't really my aunt, is she?" she pleaded now.

Mrs. Halliday ignored the protest, though it was true enough. It was part of her code to bestow promiscuous uncles and aunts upon the orphan, and Eve was expected to accept them gratefully.

"I haven't even *seen* her, that I remember," urged the girl.

"No," said Mrs. Halliday. "No, we spared her that, poor dear." She sighed again and crossed her hands. "And we have spared you, Eve; but you are no longer a child, and your uncle and I feel it is time you knew the truth."

"The truth," echoed Uncle Richard obediently. "Stranger than fiction—stranger than fiction."

"Many years ago, my dear, your unfortunate father treated poor Aunt Helen very



cruelly, very cruelly indeed," said Aunt Dora.

"My father—but how—what did he do?" asked Eve, aghast.

"He jilted her," said Aunt Dora in a hollow tone, "jilted her heartlessly, and broke up her life completely. It has been a terrible grief and shame to us all that any member of the family should have been such a scoundrel."

"But he must have had a reason," protested Eve.

"Reason? Certainly not. He merely wrote the unfortunate girl that he found he no longer loved her, and that was the end of it. Deny it as we may, my dear, that, of course, was the action of a coward—and a cad," said Aunt Dora smugly.

Eve flushed scarlet. "I don't agree with you," she said with impetuous indignation. "I think it was the action of an honest man."

In the tempest that followed, Alan began to wonder whether they would get out alive. Mrs. Halliday, wrapped in the sentimentality of an earlier day, was shocked and horrified at Eve. Besides, her brother's scandalous treatment of Helen Hamilton had been the family skeleton for years—a sort of gloomy heirloom which she could take out and brood upon in moments of melancholy. She wasn't going to have it wrested from her in this fashion by high-handed youth.

"And if he hadn't jilted her," said Eve suddenly and with disarming logic, "where should I be?"

"Eve! Really!" exclaimed Mrs. Halliday, who for some strange reason clearly thought the question indelicate.

"And what about my mother?" continued the girl relentlessly.

"Ah, we cannot blame *her*," Aunt Dora was generous enough to explain. "She met your wretched father years later."

She shook her head and sighed again, eyeing the girl with disapproval. Eve was undoubtedly hard—she had said so only that evening. It was in the blood, of course, but for her own sake she must learn better.

In the course of the lesson only one thing became clear—the announcement of Eve's engagement to Alan Ferguson must be indefinitely postponed.

Miss Hamilton, it appeared, had been unable to bear "the terrible disgrace," and had left England to live in a dreadful draughty Medici palace in Florence, only returning to beautiful, deserted Greenridges on very rare occasions. Eve had always been spirited away from the neighbourhood well

beforehand hitherto, but this time poor dear Helen had come home without warning. To flaunt the engagement in her face at the very moment of arrival would be a cruel affront in the painful circumstances, Mrs. Halliday pointed out.

"You cannot build your happiness upon the misfortunes of others, Eve."

"No, no," said Uncle Richard. "*Noblesse oblige, noblesse oblige.*"

"Yes, but look here, sir," protested Alan, "suppose Miss Hamilton elects to stay here indefinitely, you're not going to ask Eve to jilt me, surely?"

"Sufficient unto the day, my boy, is the evil thereof," said Mr. Halliday.

"Yes, but two wrongs don't make a right, sir."

Alan thought he had capped that one rather neatly, but he was quickly disillusioned. The bulwarks of the nation did not like flippancy on solemn subjects. If poor Aunt Helen decided to remain at Greenridges, they would consider what could be done about it. In the meantime Eve must have the grace to put herself and her happiness entirely in the background. It was unfortunate that her maternal relatives were out of England at the moment, or Aunt Dora would most certainly have packed her off to them forthwith.

"If Eve is in the way," said Alan, with indignation, "she had better come home to Silverlea with me! My mother would be delighted."

"That," said Aunt Dora unexpectedly, "is a most sensible suggestion, Alan. I am glad you at least are taking the matter in the proper spirit."

To do her justice, the poor lady was convinced it was her duty to keep Eve out of the way, and was at her wits' end to know just how it was to be done. A telephone call to Mrs. Ferguson soon settled the matter, and Eve, still in deep disgrace, was sent off with Alan to Silverlea to wait until called for. Those choice spirits Madge and Roger alone cheered her departure.

"The Villain's Daughter, or, Driven from Home," said Roger soulfully. "We'll report progress, old thing, so buck up. You have all the luck to miss Aunt Medici."

"Yes, she'd be bound to put poison in your soup," said Madge. But Eve, who was always unexpected, seemed suddenly sorry to go.

"I'd like to see her," she said.

Alan, driving home, gave a good imitation of Aunt Dora at her worst.



"Let this be a lesson to you, Eve," he admonished. "Never jilt. It's not done in the best families. Besides, if you do, all your friends and relatives will sit round burning the scandal at both ends for years and years."

"Alan," exclaimed Eve, ignoring this bright effort, "suppose she stays three months, and the wedding has to be put off? That's frightfully unlucky."

"It will be for her," promised Alan, with what he fondly hoped was a sardonic laugh. "She shall curse the day she ever crossed my path! Ha, ha!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Eve repeated her desire to see the Jilted Lady next morning when she and Alan had gone into the village on an errand for his mother, and so they strolled home past Greenridges, peering in through the overgrown shrubbery like a pair of arch-conspirators.

Aunt Medici had come to stay. If she has, that puts the lid on it. We'll have to start a reign of terror—bombs in the bathroom or something to scare her back to her poison palace."

"Somebody's coming!" warned Eve, as a man's head appeared above the hedge, and



"A heavy figure shot round the corner of the house and clutched the young man in his arms."

"Pull your hat over your eyes," said Alan darkly, "for we must not be recognised. By Jove, there's a foreign-looking bandit weeding the drive, which looks as though

Alan, with a fine melodramatic flourish, drew her away.

"Hist!" he said. "That must be Peter the Poisoner! I can see it in his eye."



The first bulletin from Madge and Roger confirmed the theory that the Jilted Lady had come home for good, bringing with her, much to the disapproval of Mr. and

she couldn't quite believe in anyone who was content to sit down and be a jilted lady for ever after. Besides, if the stranger's presence were really going to delay her own little romance, it was as well to take stock of the enemy.

After luncheon, therefore, they strolled once more in the neighbourhood of Greenridges, but alas, there was yet no sign of the Hallidays' car.

"We can hardly hang about in the road," said Alan at last, "even when we do sight 'em. Suppose your aunt took it into her head to come back with Miss Medici! We should be in the soup. I say, let's sneak into the shrubbery, where we can get a good look at the drive without being seen."

It was trespass, of course, but what was that in a good cause?

"I'll tell you what, darling," said Alan, as they crept through the grounds in search of a point of vantage, "if she looks anyway human, we might send the mater over with a white flag. Or do you think we could bribe Peter the Poisoner to lure her back to Italy? I'm dashed if I'm going to be a jilted gentleman. Here, Eve, I say, look out!"

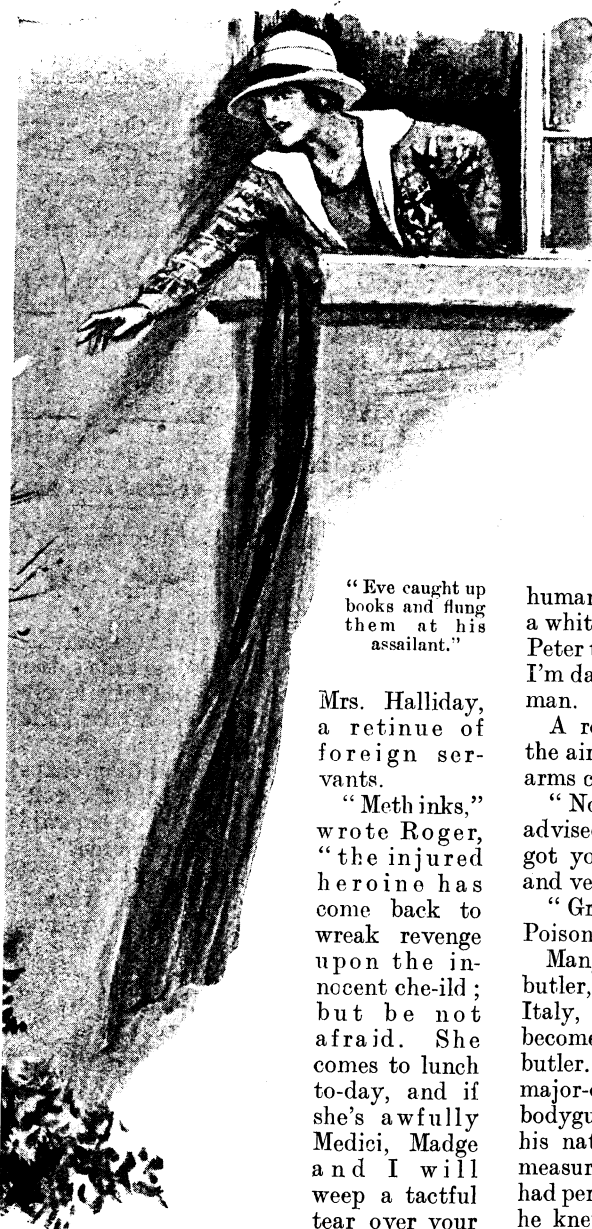
A rope had suddenly descended out of the air before them, and two pairs of strong arms clutched them from behind,

"Now, then, it's no use your struggling," advised a triumphant voice, "because we've got you! We have! Caught red-handed, and very neat, too."

"Great Scot!" said Alan. "Peter the Poisoner himself!"

Many years before, Gibbs, the Hamiltons' butler, had followed his jilted mistress to Italy, but in the course of time he had become something far more than a mere butler. To-day he was a self-appointed major-domo, Lord Chamberlain, and private bodyguard to the lady, and his return to his native land had shocked him beyond measure. The caretakers at Greenridges had permitted wholesale trespass and, for all he knew to the contrary, wholesale pilfering. Gibbs had set out to change all that, and here were a couple of arch offenders ready to his hand. He had seen them skulking mysteriously about Greenridges yesterday, and heard scraps of conversation that were as sensational as they were suspicious.

Ordinarily he would have been deterred



"Eve caught up books and flung them at his assailant."

Mrs. Halliday, a retinue of foreign servants.

"Methinks," wrote Roger, "the injured heroine has come back to wreak revenge upon the innocent che-ild; but be not afraid. She comes to lunch to-day, and if she's awfully Medici, Madge and I will weep a tactful tear over your photograph

when the family isn't looking, and drop a hint that you are dead."

"We might catch a glimpse of her driving home, if we tried," said Eve to this.

Eve, in fact, was curious. In spite of a long course of Aunt Dora's sentimentalisms,



from action by the obvious quality of the delinquents, but long residence abroad had lost him the social sense which the English servant possesses more strongly developed than any other class in the world. Dreadful things had happened since Gibbs was in England last. Who was he to say that well-dressed scoundrels might not roam at large, darkly discussing bombs and poison?

Alan, having tried argument and force in vain as he and Eve were carried captives into the house, now became frivolous, which, of course, was fatal.

"Look here, old chap, I can see you are a man of importance," he said to Gibbs. "You have probably been head assassin in some of the very best families, so how about telling me how much you want to let us go and say no more about it?"

"Bribery—that's what it is," said Mr. Gibbs with disgust, "and impudence into the bargain. You'll stop here till I get Miss Hamilton and a magistrate to see what they have to say to it."

He dismissed the hefty Italian who had assisted in the capture, backed out of the room, and locked the door behind him. Alan, with his ear at the keyhole, heard him presently at the telephone, which stood in the square, oak-panelled hall.

"Miss Hamilton—I wish to speak to Miss Hamilton. Yes, Miss Helen, Gibbs speaking. I've caught those suspicious-looking customers I mentioned to you last night—caught them red-handed in the garden. I think it might be advisable to bring Mr. Halliday back with you, him being a magistrate. He'll know what we'd better do about it."

"Hell!" said Alan. "Well, that settles it! We've got to get out of this somehow."

To face Uncle Richard, after their promise to keep carefully out of Miss Hamilton's way, was not to be thought of, and without waste of time they began a careful scrutiny of their prison.

It was a small library with wide windows about twelve feet from the ground. Very carefully they opened one, but there was neither creeper nor foothold of any kind. It was Eve who thought of the long velvet curtains. In a moment they had pulled one down and presently succeeded in fastening it to the leg of a heavy Jacobean table near the window. They had thrust it out and Alan had just descended by it, with Eve ready to follow, when a heavy figure shot round the corner of the house and clutched the young man in his arms.

Eve caught up books and flung them at his assailant, and then a brass inkstand and a silver paperweight, but her aim was by no means as good as her presence of mind.

Gibbs, arriving on the scene a moment later, smiled with satisfaction.

"Aha, getting away with the swag, were you? Very pretty, my fine gentleman! Very pretty, indeed!" he said.

When next Eve and Alan had the library to themselves, they were securely tied into a couple of heavy leather chairs, and escape was out of the question. Having nothing else to do, they lay back and shouted with laughter.

It is possible that Gibbs's summons was rather a relief to the Jilted Lady, for luncheon had been a melancholy meal, at which Mrs. Halliday almost wept with joy over seeing poor dear Helen again. Mr. Halliday said, "Come, come, my dear, let the dead past bury its dead." "Life is mostly froth and bubble, you know." "All roads lead to Rome—or from Rome in this case, eh, Helen?"

Roger and Madge had endeavoured to shed a little brightness on the scene by references to death and the tomb, which they fancied they did rather well.

"Have you been to the village churchyard, Aunt Helen?" Madge asked the visitor sweetly. "There's a perfectly lovely tombstone just been put up to a poor little baby. I'm sure you'd adore it."

"You know, we get some Italian chaps at Cambridge," Roger broke into the conversation presently. "Good old Spaghetti! He had the best funeral I've ever seen."

"Really, Roger, your aunt is not interested in your undergraduate friends, and don't, please, discuss such distressing subjects at the table. You should try to cheer her up," protested Mrs. Halliday.

"Yes, we want Eve here, don't we?" said Madge, and then jumped and looked with pretended fear at her mother, adding brightly: "I'm perfectly sure it's going to rain."

The Jilted Lady replied, "Do you really think so?" but she was deciding with relieved astonishment, "I rather like those little devils."

The chastening of Madge over her carefully arranged *faux pas* gave Roger a moment alone with the guest in the drawing-room. He used it to move ostentatiously a photograph of Eve on the piano. The Jilted Lady studied the picture, read the signature, and smiled.



"And is *she* dead?" she inquired.

"Hush! Not officially," said Roger.

"Yes, isn't it a ripping view?"

When, therefore, Gibbs rang up, it was not Mr. Halliday whose escort the Jilted Lady requested.

"I am dreadfully sorry, Dora, but I am called home unexpectedly on business," she said, returning to the drawing-room. "I won't have the car, thank you, but will cut across the park, and perhaps these two young people will take me half-way."

"Dear me, that's very tiresome for you, my poor darling!" mourned Aunt Dora. "Couldn't Richard go and see to the wretched business for you?"

"Not for the world." Miss Hamilton spoke almost with tactless haste, then remembered herself in time. "You forget I am used to paddling my own canoe," she added gravely.

"Ah, yes, yes, indeed!" sighed Aunt Dora.

Once clear of the house, the Jilted Lady shook her two bland companions by the arm. "Now, you two, what is it all about?" she said.

At the same moment Gibbs was telephoning the second edition of his capture into the horrified ears of Mr. Halliday.

"The car, the car, Dora, the car without delay!" ordered the bulwark of the nation excitedly.

The car, however, had to go round by the road, so that it was Miss Hamilton herself who first reached Greenridges. She was smoking one of Roger's cigarettes, and looking by no means the "poor dear" that Aunt Dora believed her.

Gibbs, however, was greatly upset to see her arrive alone, and remonstrated volubly as she threw open the library door.

"A pair of impudent young desperadoes, Miss Helen, I do assure you, and I don't think it at all advisable that you should see them without Mr. Halliday's protection and advice," said Gibbs.

It was an unfortunate speech, on the whole, for Miss Hamilton, in the course of adventurous and quite amusing years, had developed a taste for desperadoes and no taste at all for protection and advice. She looked at the culprits—looked very hard at one of them—then shut the door in her butler's face.

"How kind of you to call upon me like this!" she said.

The desperadoes had the grace to grin.

"I'm awfully sorry we can't get up to receive you," apologised Alan, "but you see how it is. Your head assassin is such a hasty chap at jumping to conclusions."

"He certainly seems to have jumped to some purpose," said Miss Hamilton drily. "No doubt the customs of the country have changed since he was in England before. Gibbs is not quite used to guests who lurk about the shrubbery and throw my treasures out of the windows."

"Of course I know it must look rather fishy," agreed Eve, "but really there is quite an innocent explanation. You see, the—the fact is, we had heard so much about you, and we—rather wanted to see what you were like."

"To see whether I wore much crepe, no doubt," said the Jilted Lady with asperity.

Eve opened astonished eyes. She found she was really liking the Jilted Lady. It was such a relief, after dear Aunt Dora, to meet somebody who didn't mind showing claws.

"Meanwhile I had better release you, I suppose," said Miss Hamilton. But it was Alan and not Eve whom she approached. "You won't jump out of the window with the grandfather clock, or throw a chair at me, will you?"

"Upon my honour," promised Alan. "And look here, it's awfully decent and sporting of you, Miss Hamilton. We really will be able to explain it all some time."

"Ah!" said the Jilted Lady. "Well, hadn't you better go and cut the cords of your companion in crime meanwhile? Now you are here," she added, strolling slowly about the room, "perhaps we might make a bargain. You live in the neighbourhood, I suppose?"

"Er—yes," said the culprits guiltily.

"How interesting! Whereabouts?"

"Oh—er—over there," said Alan.

"Very lucid. And what is your name? No, don't tell me it is Norval or even Smith. I have heard both those before, and, after all, I dare say the name doesn't matter. You shall purchase your freedom with a little information, you two. Do you know a girl named Eve Callendar?"

"Oh, rather!" said Alan.

"What sort of person is she?"

Miss Hamilton still had her back to them, and Eve put a quick hand over Alan's mouth.

"Pretty awful," she said.

"Oh, really?" The Jilted Lady turned round and surveyed them with languid interest. "Then she takes after her father,



of course," she said. "Many years ago John Callendar jilted a friend of mine—but then, he was a scoundrel."

"He was nothing of the kind," flamed Eve immediately.

"But, my dear child, how can you know anything about it? You couldn't possibly have been born."

"No, I wasn't," said Eve, "and I don't care. He only broke off his engagement because he found he didn't love the girl. I think he was an honest man."

"Mr. Richard Halliday!" announced Gibbs at the door with triumph.

"Eve! Alan! Good Heavens, what does this mean?" said the startled magistrate.

The Jilted Lady in that awkward moment showed herself a person of resource. She hastily concealed her cigarette, kicked the incriminating cord beneath Eve's chair, and hurried to meet her quite unwelcome guest.

"My dear Richard, how perfectly absurd! Do you mean to say that wretched Gibbs brought you all this way for nothing? It was really too bad of him," she said.

"Nothing, nothing?" said Uncle Richard. "I assure you he told me some terrible tale of burglars. Ladies in distress, you know, Helen, ladies in distress, and here I am."

"Gibbs is growing feeble," mourned Miss Hamilton, shaking her head. "He had some wild story, but I soon found it was all nonsense. Living abroad, you know, has upset Gibbs. Of course there was no burglar."

"And what," said Mr. Halliday ponderously, "do you young people mean by intruding upon your aunt at such a time? Inexcusable, Eve. I'm surprised at you, greatly surprised."

"Oh, you mustn't blame *them*," said Miss Hamilton, with a fleeting glance of mischief at the culprits. "They were almost carried here against their wills, really. And now I'm keeping them to dinner with me, so that I can hear all about the wedding."

"Ah! Kind hearts are more than coronets," said Mr. Halliday faintly. "Far more, yes, yes, yes."

Not for the first time he found it a little trying to be a bulwark without Aunt Dora to prop him up.

"Well, then, I must run back," he added, "since there is no burglar, after all. But don't let them tire you out, my dear—those two young people. Remember, charity begins at home. Charity begins at home."

"And generally stays there, I am afraid," said the Jilted Lady, ushering him out. "Good-bye, Richard. So good of you to have come!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"By George, I believe she knew us all the time!" said Alan. "But how? Look here, those kids must have pulled it off, somehow. As for the head assassin, I'll give him a fiver for his pains."

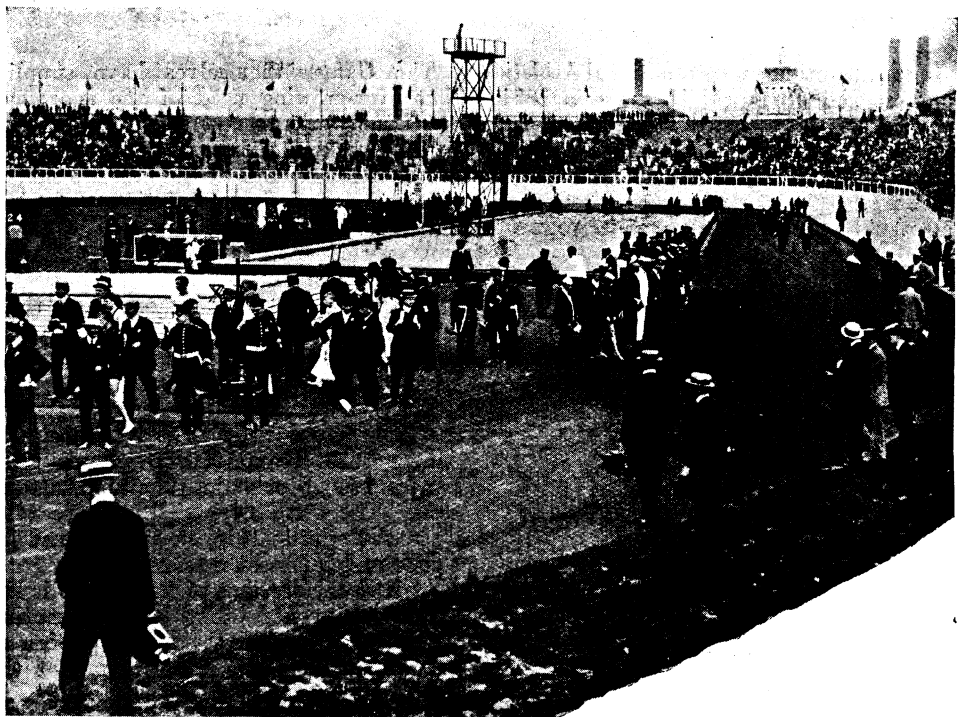
Eve was not listening. She heard the car drive off, and now she was keeping a slightly apprehensive but entirely pleased eye on the door. At last it opened, and the Jilted Lady came in.

She opened her cigarette case and offered it to Eve. "And they're not poisoned, either," she said, with a twinkle in her eye. "Well, Miss Callendar, so you know your father was an honest man?"

"Yes, I do," said Eve, and then she smiled at the Jilted Lady. "But I think he must have missed a lot of fun," she said.







A SECTION OF THE TRACK AT THE GREAT STADIUM, SHEPHERD'S BUSH, AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES HELD IN LONDON IN 1908.

# THE OLYMPIC GAMES

By F. A. M. WEBSTER

*Photographs by Sport & General*

THE Olympic Games are the logical outcome of a perfectly natural desire upon the part of the sportsmen of every nation to see just how good, or bad, their own performances may be in comparison with those of the people of other nations.

In this respect international records are of small help. The atmosphere of California and South Africa favour record-breaking feats, and the athletic track in Stockholm is well known to be faster than any other, and, again, the rarefied Swedish air brings within the compass of the athlete performances that in London might not be possible.

In the early 'sixties England held championship meetings, in the middle 'seventies America followed suit. At that

time we were quite the better nation, but no sooner had the 'nineties dawned than American universities and clubs were anxious to meet us in competition. In 1895 the London Athletic Club met the New York Athletic Club in New York and suffered a staggering defeat. At this meeting American athletes broke three world's records and equalled another, namely, 100 yards in  $9\frac{1}{2}$  seconds, 220 yards in  $21\frac{3}{4}$  seconds, half a mile in 1 minute  $53\frac{3}{4}$  seconds, and a high jump of 6 feet  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

The year following the great match in America the Scandinavian countries began to hold championship meetings of their own and to meet each other in international competition. The cult of British sport had already spread widely across the Continent of Europe.



In the meantime an International Athletic Congress had been held in Paris in 1894, at which it was decided to reinstate the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece in a form adapted to suit modern conditions.

From the first it was recognised that imperfect humanity has ever tended towards

The Games themselves have supplied that ever-growing need of the sportsmen of all the world to test themselves against each other for the discovery of the premier people, since records at the best are subject to extraneous influence of time and place and local environment.

A permanent International Olympic Committee controls matters. It consists of at least one and never more than three representatives from each of the thirty odd nations concerned, and has its seat at Lausanne.

The Olympic Games have been celebrated six times since their revival, namely, at Athens 1896, Paris 1900, St. Louis 1904, London 1908, Stockholm 1912, and Antwerp 1920. The sixth Olympiad, due to take place at Berlin in 1916, was abandoned for "good and sufficient reasons."

At past celebrations of the Games it has usually happened that the promoting nation has captured the major portion of points scored in the total events of the whole programme. This happened in America, England, and Sweden. In the athletic section, however, which is generally regarded as the most important part of the Games, America has, up to the present, proved supreme—a circumstance due, in no small measure, to her vast constituencies of universities, colleges, and schools, and the wonderfully perfect system of coaching and scratch competition that obtains in the States.

The International Committee, which alone has power to decide the venue for each celebration of the Olympic Games, has decreed that the forthcoming eighth Olympiad shall be held in Paris, and this year even America's infinite versatility and amazing capacity for victory will be tested to the utmost. Norwegian jumpers claimed victory in the ski-jumping contests at the winter sports section of the Olympic Games, which has been held already at Chamonix in the French Alps, and it is the handwriting of Scandinavia that has inscribed a warning upon the wall that all who have eyes to see may clearly understand.

In 1908, when the Games were held in London, Scandinavians took all six places in both styles of javelin throwing, and had minor successes in the distance races, the pole vault, and the discus throw. In 1910 Sweden recalled from the United States—where he had had a wonderful athletic education—the great Swedish-American trainer Ernie Hjertberg, who turned his



BRIGADIER-GENERAL R. G. KENTISH,

*Hon. Secretary of the British Olympic Association.*

the transformation of the amateur Olympic athlete into the paid gladiator, and that the two things are incompatible, but that the modern Olympic movement has disseminated the ideal of clean sport and pure amateurism has been proved in the issue.





CHARLES HOFF, NORWEGIAN, FIRST FAVOURITE FOR THE DECATHLON AND PENTATHLON.

*This photograph shows him winning the World's Pole Jump Record at Copenhagen.*

countrymen into good enough athletes to beat all the world but America at the Stockholm Olympiad in 1912. The sixth Olympiad, of course, was never held. The seventh took place at Antwerp immediately following the signing of the Peace Treaty.

It was at Antwerp that the accumulated strength of Scandinavia was made apparent, although with all first six places in each event scoring for points, the United States, having fielded the fullest team permissible, won the victory. The way the points were



scored, and the final placings recorded, are given below :—

SEVENTH OLYMPIAD, ANTWERP, 1920.  
FINAL POSITIONS AND POINTS.

1. U.S.A. ....	210	9. Norway ....	11
2. Finland ....	95	10. Esthonia ....	10
3. Sweden ....	90	11. {Belgium ....	9
4. British Isles ..	80	11. {Denmark ....	9
5. France.... ....	33	13. {New Zealand ..	5
6. Italy .... ....	29	13. {Australia ....	5
7. S. Africa ....	23	15. Czecho-	
		Slovakia .....	3
8. Canada ....	13	16. Luxemburg ..	1

It will be noticed that Finland, a small nation, hitherto almost unheard of in international contests, had so built up her strength, since she sent a few men to compete and learn as much as they were able at the London Olympic Games in 1908, that she was strong enough in 1920 to take second place to America. In the javelin throw, Finlanders filled first four places, and each one of her throwers beat the previous Olympic record, as did also the young Esthonian who was fifth. They were first and second in the discus throwing and shot putting events, and first in the hop step and jump, cross-country race, 10,000 metres track race, and the Marathon race; first also in the Pentathlon.

Finland's strength to-day is probably treble what it was in 1920. The majority of their wonderful old field events performers are doing better than ever; those that have fallen out they will replace with even more efficient young blood. Their sprinters and hurdlers have come on amazingly, so that we may be sure they will give a very good account of themselves in the relays as well as in the individual events. For the 3,000 metres team race they have a quartette of world's record-breakers, while their distance runners seem well-nigh unbeatable. Paayo Nurmi, who last year, at Stockholm, established a new world's record of 4 minutes 10½ seconds for one mile, shares with his fellow-Finlander Hannes Kolehmainen the majority of the modern world's distance records, and this same Kolehmainen, incidentally, was winning English championships as long ago as 1911. In 1912 he won the Olympic 5,000 and 10,000 metres races and the cross-country race. In 1920 Nurmi relieved his senior on the track, and won the 10,000 metres and the cross-country race, thus leaving Kolehmainen free to win

the Marathon race, which he is confident of capturing again at Paris next July.

In the meantime America has moved and, even at this eleventh hour, is still moving heaven and earth to find or produce Olympic champions to enable her still to hold the laurels, of which she has never yet been deprived since the first of the modern Olympiads was held at Athens in 1896.

America's chance is a sporting one, no more no less, but she will have to fight, and fight hard, for every point that goes to make up the sum total of victory. For the Marathon race, the longer distance track events, cross-country race, steeplechase, walking races, javelin throw, Decathlon and Pentathlon, the United States is undoubtedly short of men. She has only two first-class discus throwers to fill four places, and is likely to divide hammer-throwing honours with ourselves and Sweden. Her pole vaulters are very good, but she has no one of the class of the young Norwegian painter Charles Hoff, who holds the wonderful world's record of 13 feet 9¾ inches.

In the United States there is a whole army of sprinters who can equal even time for 100 yards, and quite a few who can beat 10 seconds. We, on the other hand, have three or four men in Great Britain who are the equals of anyone the rest of the world can produce at the two sprint distances.

The British quarter milers are almost as good as the best Americans, but here one of our own Dominions is likely to cut into us, since the South African schoolboy L. B. B. Betts has some wonderful times to his credit. Again, the fact that E. H. Liddell, the English Open and Scottish National Champion, refuses to take part in any event held on a Sunday, robs us of his services in the 100 metres sprint and the 400 and 1,600 metres relay races. This is a blow to our hopes, but Abrahams, Nicoll, or Matthewman, if his leg has recovered, may prove equal to the issue; if not, America will gain heavily.

Norway, too, is going to cut hard into the vitals of the hitherto senior point scoring nations. At Antwerp Captain Helge Lövland, now Athletic Director of Norway, won the most coveted of all prizes, that of Victor Ludorum in the Decathlon. This is surely the greatest test of the individual athlete ever devised by the brain of man. Norwegians, too,



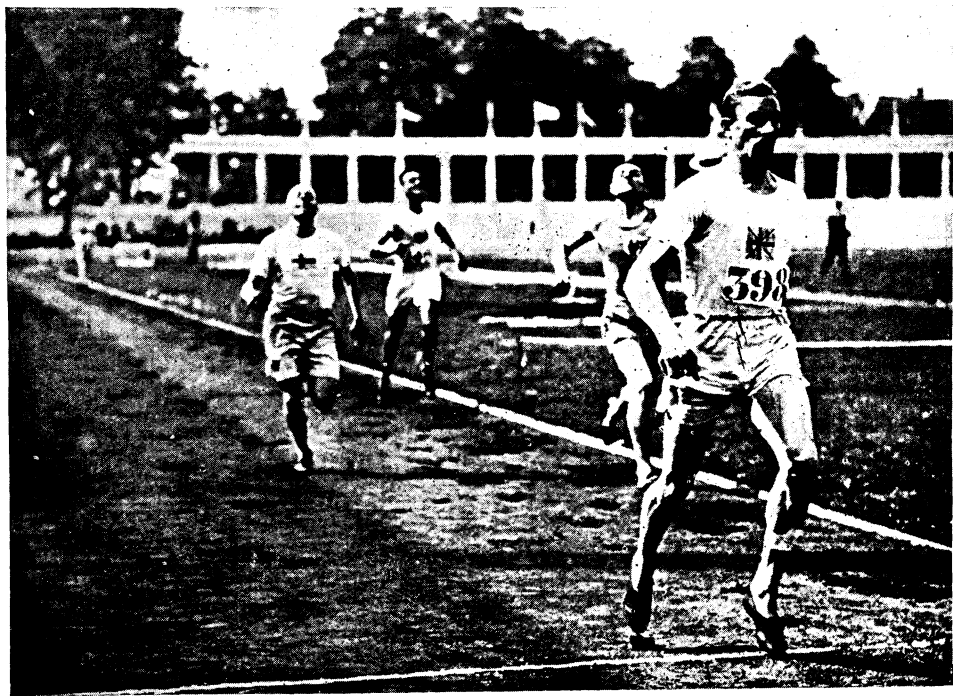
took point-scoring places in several other events. This year they have a second tower of strength in Charles Hoff. His victory in the pole vault is, barring accidents, well assured, since time and again he has gone within an inch or two of his own record of 13 feet 9 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches.

Hoff, in addition, is first favourite for the Decathlon and Pentathlon. A list of his accomplishments may well prove a lesson to our apologists, whose parrot cry is that we British people do not shine at the Olympic Games, since we, being so wonderfully good "all round," cannot hope

and discus or put the shot, and so cannot assess his capabilities, it is certain that Helge Lövland will have seen that his pupil is proficient in these, three of the most popular events with Scandinavian athletes.

Another country which will serve a useful purpose in cutting down the chances of any of the bigger nations effecting a runaway victory is Italy, whose wonderful walker, Ugo Frigerio, is most likely to repeat his dual victory of 1920.

The position of the United States in the high and broad jumps is well-nigh



A. G. HILL WINNING THE EIGHT HUNDRED METRES AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF 1920.

to excel individually as do the foreigners. It may be so, but the performances of men of the calibre of Hoff seem to contradict any such theory.

In the broad jump Hoff does better than 24 feet, beats 45 feet in the hop step and jump, 6 feet in the high jump, and 15 $\frac{3}{8}$  seconds for 110 metres high hurdles. On the track he has been timed to do 22 $\frac{1}{2}$  seconds for 200 metres, 49 $\frac{1}{2}$  seconds for 400 metres, and 1 minute 56 seconds for 800 metres. The latter time proves that he is likely to produce something equally good for 1,500 metres; and although I myself have never seen him throw the javelin

unassailable. In the former event she has two men who have beaten 6 feet 7 inches, and four who are capable of 6 feet 5 inches, while two American negroes have both beaten 25 feet in the running broad jump.

In relation to the strength of teams which gave America such a pull at the last Olympiad, it may be safely assumed that the United States will again send the full quota of four men for each event. Unlike ourselves, America, even if her four best selections in any one event break down, has possibly a dozen men who are almost as good to take the places of the delinquents. But whether America, although she may be



sure of certain gold medals, will find it as easy as before to pack two or three more out of the six point-scoring places, is quite another matter. I, for one, do not believe that she will be able to do it. The little nations are so thoroughly keen now, and do not seem to mind to what expense they go, so long as the best possible tuition is made available for their athletes.

For example, Holland last year enlisted the services of Ernie Hjertberg, the man who was mainly responsible for the rapid rise of Sweden to the position of second athletic nation in the world at Stockholm

instruction given by American coaches, or, at all events, by men who have learnt the very real art of coaching in the States. Even far off in China, Japan, and South America the same splendid sporting activity and the same first-class instruction are in evidence. In 1920 Czecho-Slovakia scored but three points, and Luxemburg only one; but Esthonia scored no less than ten, and this year Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and many another new state will be represented at the Games by men eager for points, and it is these winners of a point here and there who are going so greatly to influence



TRAINING AT THE WHITE CITY STADIUM FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES, WITH HARRY ANDREWS AS COACH  
THE CORRECT POSITION—"GET SET!"

and third place Antwerp. It may be that the time has been all too short, and Dutch athletic conditions too bad for Hjertberg to produce an Olympic champion by next July; but what I saw of the Dutch athletes, when I was in Holland recently, convinces me that quite a few of them will force their way into the "final sixes" at Paris.

What is true of Holland is true of the rest of the world. Since the last Olympiad I have spent many months wandering through Scandinavia and all across Europe for the purpose of studying modern athletic conditions. Everywhere my work has taken me I have seen the same things—wonderful keenness by young athletes and first-class

the ultimate result by reducing the scores of the bigger nations.

Great Britain's position, not only in relation to the Olympic Games, but to international competition generally, is a curious one.

There can be no doubt that the Olympic Games have greatly stimulated the diffusion of sport throughout the world, nor is it open to question that it is the British people who have always insisted upon the very highest ideals of clean sportsmanship and pure amateurism in these greatest of all international contests, and yet, for understandable reasons with which one need not necessarily agree, the Olympic



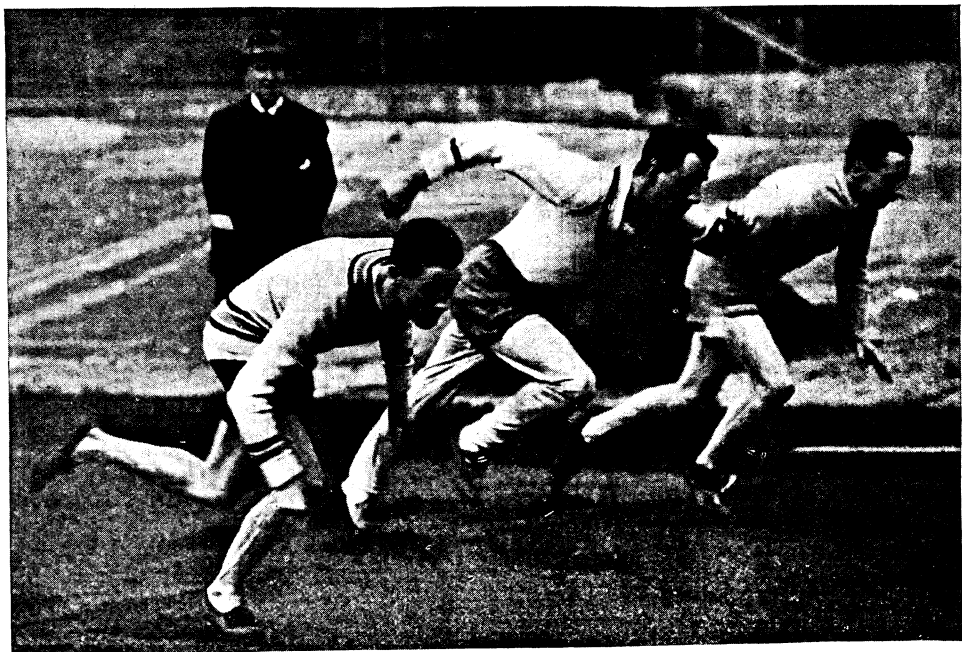
movement for long remained unpopular with British sportsmen.

In the first place, the task of promoting the fourth Olympiad in London was thrust upon us at short notice, through the inability of the Italians to fulfil their promise to hold the festival at Rome. Money was hard to raise, and an "incident," which, by tacit consent, is best forgotten, left an unpleasant flavour behind it. Even in 1908, when most of the other nations were in their athletic infancy, our field events men—jumpers, hurdlers, and throwers—did not shine.

The dismal failure of our ill-organised and worse-equipped team that went to Stockholm

heaviest odds than we have ever done before in any international contest open to the whole world. Ill-luck dogged our footsteps. H. F. V. Edward, our great sprinter, was left at the post in the 100 metres final, and strained a thigh muscle in the semi-final of the 200 metres, and yet in the final of both the sprints he finished third. B. G. D. Rudd, the splendid Oxford quarter and half miler, had the option of representing either Great Britain or South Africa, and chose to appear in the colours of the Dominion.

It was in the field events and hurdle races, however, that our deficiencies were



TRAINING AT THE WHITE CITY STADIUM FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES, WITH HARRY ANDREWS AS COACH:  
WELL OFF FOR A SPRINT.

in 1912 was relieved only by the brilliant win in the 1,500 metres of the great Oxonian A. N. S. Jackson, and the almost equally fine performance of the British Relay Team (W. R. Applegarth, V. D'Arcy, D. H. Jacobs, and the late H. M. MacIntosh), which won the 400 metres relay race.

The subsequent attempt of the Duke of Westminster's Olympic Appeal Committee to raise £100,000 for our future preparation was an equally dismal failure. The coming of the seventh Olympiad found us war-worn and weary, and yet our men put up a magnificent fight and did better in the face of the

most apparent. Had we been as good in this branch of athletics as were our athletes upon the track, then there is no possible shade of doubt that not even the all-conquering Americans themselves could have beaten us.

To-day many of our disabilities have been removed. The genius mainly responsible for a most remarkable accomplishment is Brigadier-General R. J. Kentish, C.M.G., D.S.O.

In the first days at Antwerp it looked as if the tragedy of Stockholm was to be repeated. The situation was saved by



the appointment of Colonel Kentish, as he then was, to the office of commandant of all the British Olympic teams present in Belgium.

The tale of his service to British sport is a long one; suffice it to say here that General Kentish created harmony, and made of the British team headquarters in Antwerp a centre of international amity, where the representatives of foreign countries knew that they would at all times find a welcome no less hearty than that extended to the men from our own Dominions.

What General Kentish, as Hon. Sec. of the British Olympic Association, has accomplished in the four years between has been still more remarkable.

In the past the lack of money has been our principal bugbear. A little over a year ago the most influential council that has ever been assembled in connection with sport launched an appeal for no less a sum than £30,000, a very great deal of money in these post-war days. Up to the date of writing this article, £21,900 has been collected in actual cash, and another £5,500 is promised on sound undertakings.

Of this money £13,000 has been set aside by the Finance Committee for the requirements of the teams at Chamonix and in Paris, and approximately £8,000 has been allocated to the governing bodies of the various branches of sport involved, to enable them to make adequate arrangements for the preparation and selection of their teams. Further than that, the Olympic Council has put in order and equipped two great Olympic training centres at the White City and the Crystal Palace, and, through the good offices of the British Olympic Association, many other grounds

are being put in order or created throughout the country.

The work in connection with these grounds alone is finding employment for great numbers of men who have been on the dole too long; and, better still, since in London alone some 36,000 boys the year before last were forced to fill the rôle of onlookers,



F. R. GABY.

*A photograph showing his recent victory in the 120-yards Open Hurdles Handicap at the Civil Service Athletic Sports.*

because no playing pitches could be found for them, these new grounds, with their tracks and large central grass spaces, will provide homes of recreation and athletic instruction for hundreds of thousands of young Britons who hitherto have enjoyed no such facilities.



What the British Olympic Association has accomplished in the past four years is truly remarkable, but even that pales into insignificance in face of the task before it, for it is nothing less than the organisation of the athletic education of the whole country.

This year, I think, we must be content to lose in athletics at the Olympic Games, as we have lost before, and for the same reason. The task before the British Olympic Association is to see that we do not lose from a similar cause at Amsterdam, where the ninth Olympiad will be held in 1928.

It is through no national decadence that we have suffered defeat. We have in these islands the finest natural material and native talent of any nation in the world; but we have lacked good organisation in the past, and still lack good instructors. Hitherto we have sacrificed every form of athletics to the fetish of creating sprinters and middle distance runners by means of pot-hunting handicap races. In consequence our sprinters, quarter-milers, half-milers and milers are just about as good as the best the world can produce to-day; but they are no better, and, as things are, the total track events make up only one-half of the Olympic athletic programme. The other half comprises field events. Even on the track we find ourselves caught woefully short of distance runners, and our field events men simply do not exist.

It is true that we have brilliant isolated champions, such as M. C. Nokes, the Oxford hammer thrower, and our hurdlers F. R. Gaby and L. E. Partridge, but where are our high and long jumpers and hop step and jumpers, our pole vaulters and shot putters, our javelin and discus throwers? More important still, where in Great Britain to-day can we find the professional coaches, such as every other country has, to teach these fine body-building exercises to our athletes? They appreciate the personal and international value of them, and are only too anxious to become proficient.

The Olympic Council feels, I know, that

the start must be made in the schools and universities and in the Services, and spread outwards to the clubs and county athletic organisations, but, even so, the whole of our future turns upon our willingness to appoint first-class coaches and to profit by their advice.

There was a time when we could pick and choose, saying we did not wish this or that event to be included in the programme; but that day has departed with the passing of our isolated superiority in even one single event. To-day we must take or leave the programme just as the representatives of all the nations concerned have drawn it up for international competition. It is quite clear that we must either cultivate all the events or stand out altogether, and we, who claim to have taught the world to play the game for the game's sake, can hardly, because we cannot without some trouble any longer hold our own, quit what is really a great campaign for a cleaner and fuller humanity, by refusing to continue to participate in the Olympic Games, which have done so much to give effect to those very ideals at which we have always aimed.

Our guarantee for the future lies in the increasing interest that is being taken in such events as the old British pastime of pole vaulting and those new importations, throwing the javelin and throwing the discus. That there is an interest in these events is proved by the fact that one British firm alone imported five thousand javelins and a thousand discii last year. It is, moreover, significant that all the field events have been taken up enthusiastically in the Services, and are practised also at the provincial universities, by whom they are included at the Inter-University Board Championships of Great Britain and Ireland.

We have undoubtedly had a long dark lane to traverse in our search after Olympic honours, and we shall not gain them at Paris this year in any great numbers; but the turning is in sight at last, and there may be a different tale to tell both before and after the subsequent Olympiad at Amsterdam in 1928.





# THEIR ISLAND

By ARTHUR MILLS

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

AS far as the eye could see, the grazing lands stretched desolate. There was something terrible in the sight of the great estate in the grip of drought; thousands of cattle listlessly lying by the river bank; mile after rolling mile of brown parched soil; sky sultry blue; artesian wells silent; the very trees drooping and faint.

Donato scanned the sky, looking for the signs we all wanted.

"How much longer can the cattle live?" I asked.

The old gaucho looked at some steers huddled under the shade of a paraíso tree. He took no notice of the question; it was evident that the cattle could not live long. They had grazed along the river, where alone there was still a rim of green, till nothing remained. Now the only fodder was on an island in mid-stream, where a few trees rose from a carpet of thick undergrowth. I pointed to the island.

Donato shook his head. "No, señor, the cattle will not go there. The peons themselves do not care to go to the island."

We were abreast the place, and I could see among the trees what appeared to be the remains of some sort of dwelling.

"But someone lived there once? See, there has been a house."

"A temple," Donato corrected me. "You know, señor, before the Spaniards came, the Indians lived in these parts. They had their gods, which they worshipped in a fashion of their own." He spoke contemptuously, though himself of half Indian blood.

We rode on in silence till we came to the *pulperia*. I longed to ask the old man more about the island to which the cattle would not go, but it was useless to hustle him. When he had had his *maté*, Donato might or might not talk.

Arrived at the *pulperia*, we settled ourselves at a table under a tree. The week's work had been hard, and the peons lay

about on the ground, sleeping heavily. Near by a man was stretched on his poncho, his head resting on his saddle, one arm crooked behind his neck. His chest rose and fell evenly with his breathing; he was sleeping like a man drunk or drugged, his face hidden by his hat pulled over his eyes.

Leonita, the proprietor's daughter, came out to ask our wants. I had often noticed the girl's slim figure and dark eloquent eyes. In a land where women are scarce, and the fall of the *taba* (hock bone of a steer, with which the peons gamble) enough cause for killing, she caught the eye. Old Gomes, her father, was a rich man, as all camp storekeepers are. This was some safeguard, placing Leonita above the peons and men from the "camp," who would otherwise have fought for her.

Donato ordered *cana*, but in the meanwhile took the bowl of *maté* Leonita had brought. No doubt in the great heat the scalding bitter-tasting tea was a splendid beverage, but, abominating *maté* myself, I was content to let Donato suck the *bombilla*. Having finished, he set his bowl by his side.

"That island about which you asked me, señor."

"Oh, yes," I said off-handedly.

Donato looked mistrustfully at the peon on the ground. I stirred the man with my foot. "*Hola!*" I called; then louder, "*Hola!*" The fellow grunted, flinging his other arm behind his head, his hat tilting further forward over his face.

"He hears nothing," I assured Donato.

The old gaucho still seemed reluctant to begin. Afterwards, when he had finished, I understood his reasons. For it was a strange tale Donato told—a story of the days when the Indians flourished where the Estancia St. Martin now stood. He could himself remember the last survivors of the tribe, of whom he was a direct descendant.

"It is not good to talk of treasure to a Spaniard, señor," the old man finished. "In the old days to learn what I have told



you the Spaniards would have tortured many people. And, after all, it may only be a fairy tale."

"But has no one ever been to the island to find out?" I asked.

"No, señor; no living thing goes over to that island. Even when the Indians were here, the men of the tribe never went across. Only the priests lived over there. And what they did I cannot tell you. Nor do I know whether the green stones which the tribe were said to possess are really buried there. It would be strange if they are, for an island is a little thing, altering much in shape, and it is many years since the Spaniards first came up the Parana."

Donato finished his *cana* and rose. "Remember, señor, I have told no one the things I have told you." He jerked his thumb contemptuously at the peon lying on the ground. "They would believe it and fight among themselves. But you, señor, may find the story of some service." As he spoke, a mischievous twinkle lit his eyes. My profession had been explained to him, and though the old boy could neither read nor write, at times he showed a remarkably quick comprehension of my requirements.

Still, even if he had invented the story of the buried emeralds, the fact remained that there was an island in the middle of the river, on which the remains of an old Indian temple stood, that the peons had a superstitious dread of this island, and that even in the middle of a drought the cattle would not swim over there to graze.

I lit a pipe and sat watching the retreating back of Donato rolling across the *patio* as well as his great spurs permitted. Who could say what was true or untrue in this unknown continent, to the heart of which no Stanley or Livingstone had penetrated?

I was still reflecting, when a voice at my knee called "*Che!*" Now, this word has a peculiarly friendly, intimate meaning, and such a greeting would not have been used by an ordinary peon to a stranger staying on the estate. Yet it was the peon who had been asleep close to us who had spoken.

"What's the time, *che?*" asked the man, speaking from under the hat.

But of course I knew now who it was; no need to wait till the hat was removed.

"Volstock!" I exclaimed.

The Russian sat up, rubbing his eyes.

It was several weeks since I had seen this queer fish, about whom no one knew anything, except that he had come out to South

America to work on the great cattle ranches, as men from many countries do. He had never told me anything about himself, though I felt he treated me more nearly as a friend than anyone else in his adventurous life. He was evidently of good family, and I fancied had once been rich; but, like all the Russians, he would gamble with anything he possessed—his week's pay, his saddlery, his horse, when he happened to have a good one, which, being a judge of such matters, he generally had.

I looked at the light blue eyes. There was a mildness in them which made it difficult to believe that only two months before he had shot a man dead near the very tree under which we were sitting.

Volstock's next question startled me. "Do you think what the old man said about the emeralds was true?"

So he had not been sleeping at all, but had heard every word of my conversation with Donato. And now, as he looked at me, I saw his expression change. There was a glitter in his eyes, a tenseness about his lips.

"Listen!" He came close. "There may be something in this story; those old Indian chiefs had some wonderful jewels. Even to-day no one knows what mines there are still undiscovered in the Andes. You have heard of the lost valley of emeralds. Books and stories have been written about it in every language. These stones may come from there, and if they do"—Volstock laughed—"well, it will be a better day's work to find a pocketful than look after cattle at forty dollars a month. Yes, *che*, we will drink a glass of *cana* together and ride down to the island to-morrow."

While Volstock talked, Leonita had come quietly up behind. She interrupted, speaking in the quick, unrestrained manner of her people: "No, you do not go to the island, I say."

"Hullo!" Volstock looked up. "Where did you spring from?"

"It is no good, that island; everyone know that."

Leonita's dark eyes watched Volstock's face. "Why do you go?" she asked.

I looked at Volstock; his face had become once more expressionless. He nodded in my direction. "Ask the señor here."

This was grossly unfair. Leonita turned to me eagerly, though I knew she cared nothing if I went to the island or not.

"There is an old temple there," I said, "that I wish to see."



"But it is nothing, only bits of the walls. Besides, you have been here several months, and now suddenly you want to go there."

"Well, I have never had anyone to go with before."

"And so you persuade him."

"Persuade! I do not persuade——"

Volstock interrupted. "No, he did not persuade me; it was I who suggested it. But why should we not go?"

"Because it is a bad place. Even Pedro, who everyone know fears nothing, said he would not go."

Leonita looked at him admiringly. She adored this slim young man, whose skin was so much fairer than the other peons, and who gave her the most lovely silk handkerchiefs.

Now I saw Donato returning. Feeling that to go to the island without telling him would be a breach of confidence, I beckoned him over.

The old horse-tamer listened to Volstock's plan. I could feel Volstock's excitement as he asked Donato questions. The treasure lust that lies just below the surface of every



"'Looks to me like some sort of snake-charmer chap,' said Volstock, looking at the picture curiously."

"Pedro!" Volstock sneered. "He is afraid, perhaps, of being bitten by a *viscacha*" (little wild dogs that live on the "camp").

It had always been a mystery to me how Volstock's insolence had not cost him his life. Pedro was one of the most noted fighters in the district. If the remark was repeated to him, Volstock might never go to any island at all. However, that was the Russian's way—to shout things other men would not have dared to whisper, and somehow he got away with it.

white man's skin possessed him wholly. Donato was conscious of this, and secretly amused by it; his forefathers had had ample chance to see where such ambitions led. Were there not to-day the bones of Spanish adventurers lying in every part of South America?

"But go, señor, by all means," Donato said. "What I have told you may only be an old man's tale."

So we arranged to set out next morning. Personally I attributed the uncanny dread of the island entirely to local superstition.



On the other hand, I put no great faith in Donato's "emerald" story. It was unlikely, even if there ever had been any emeralds buried, that they had been allowed to remain on the island undisturbed all these years. In any event, it would be interesting to see the old temple, which I fancied in that superstitious land was actually the cause of all the talk.

That night I remember as the most airless in the year. Gomes had given me a shake-down in his store, which, being roofed with tin and baked by the sun all day, at dusk became a human oven. The mosquitoes made sleeping outside impossible, and there was nothing for it but to lie on one's bed, letting the perspiration drip from one's forehead to the pillow.

Dawn broke on a sere, sun-weary land. Volstock and I ate some cooked meat, drank some tea, which came oozing from every pore of our bodies as soon as swallowed, and set out.

Looking at the sky, Volstock prophesied a storm. There were dark clouds on the horizon, and the air was heavy. But for days now there had been dark clouds about, yet the *tormento* which would have saved the cattle never came.

We came to the river bank, made neat bundles of our clothes, and secured them between our horses' ears. Then, after loosening the saddle girths, we drove the horses into the water. The animals, trained to swim since colts, plunged boldly out into the stream, towing us holding to their tails. We were nearing the island, which lay some hundred and fifty yards from shore, when I saw Volstock in difficulties with his horse. Then my own horse tried to turn. I could not understand, for an animal's instinct in water is to make for the nearest land. Then a chill seized me. I remembered Donato had said no cattle would swim across to the island.

Volstock, jumping on his horse's back, forced the animal in the required direction, and we landed safely. We tied the horses to a couple of trees and set out to explore.

The island was some hundred yards long by fifty wide. The caked character of the ground near the water's edge showed that, when the river was in flood, only the central portion of the island was uncovered. It was here, in the centre, that we found the remains of the temple. The walls had crumbled so that they were nowhere higher than the undergrowth, and in some parts level with the ground. The place had

a desolate, oppressive air, and I hoped Volstock would lose no time in carrying out his search. He had brought spades, and at his suggestion we began to dig up the floor of the temple.

We had removed a few feet of earth when I heard the ring of a spade on stone, and Volstock called me over. Plainly enough at his feet, where he had cleared away the earth, there was a layer of masonry. I suggested it was probably the original floor of the temple. Volstock thought not. He struck the stone with his spade, and asked me if I did not think it rang hollow.

"There is another room below here, *che*," he exclaimed.

His light blue eyes glittered excitedly. His smooth, fair hair tumbled over his forehead, his face was flushed, and the veins in his muscular forearms were blue and swollen with exertion. What a queer, wild fellow he was! Every line of his bearing showed that he expected at any minute to come on some wonderful discovery. As though, even if there was some secret hiding-place beneath the temple floor, it would not have been ransacked long ago! No doubt Donato's story that a superstitious dread of the island existed among the peons was true enough, but no power, natural or supernatural, would have deterred the old Spanish conquistadores in their treasure quest.

We worked feverishly, clearing away the earth. For some while a little breeze had been blowing across the water. Then in a few seconds, it seemed, the breeze changed to a strong wind. On the horizon beyond the river banks great clouds of dust showed. In the air there was a mighty whisper of rustling leaves.

"The *tormento* is coming," said Volstock, without looking up from his work.

Quickly the wind increased till the smaller trees bent to its force.

"I believe the river is rising," I said, looking at the water, which had grown a darker, muddier colour, and was flowing more swiftly.

"Very likely," Volstock agreed, "they will have had rain higher up. If the storm breaks here, you will see the water rise ten or fifteen feet. Look!" He beckoned to me.

I went across and found him standing over a great square stone that had an iron ring set in the middle. He bent down, seized the ring with both hands, and pulled with all his might. I lent a hand. Under



the combined weight of the two of us the stone moved.

I began to catch something of Volstock's excitement. Supposing we really did find the emeralds of which Donato had spoken!

candle, knelt down and held the light in the mouth of the hole.

"It is only a few feet drop," he said. "Can you manage that?"

"Ugh! Goodness knows what's down in



"As we came into the clearing where we had left the horses, we saw a horrid spectacle."

a damp, dark hole like that! Snakes probably!" I peered into the hole.

Volstock laughed. "As far as I can see, it is just a sort of empty cellar. I'm going to have a look, anyway." So saying, he dropped down through the hole.

I followed him, liking the enterprise less each minute. We found ourselves in a narrow chamber about twenty feet long; this we proceeded to examine as well as the light of the candle enabled us.

The first things we came upon were some

One more tug and the stone moved again; a last final effort, and it came away. We found ourselves looking into an opening about four feet square. The opening was completely dark. Volstock lit a stump of



curious drawings on the wall. The drawings appeared to be of a man and species of large serpent. The man was squatting on the ground with a bowl between his knees, from which the serpent was drinking, while the

So did I, and I don't mind admitting my heart nearly stopped as well. A few yards from Volstock, lying against the wall, was a snake by the side of which an ordinary python or boa would have looked a mere



"Volstock's horse lay dragged to the ground in the coils of an enormous snake. My horse, half mad with fear, tugged at his head-stall, kicking, plunging, rearing, fighting frantically to break away."

man's right hand rested caressingly on the reptile's neck.

"Seems to me like some sort of snake-charmer chap," said Volstock, looking at the picture curiously. "And, by Jove, yes, look, here's the bowl he used to feed his pet from. See, it is just the same shape as the one in the picture." He held up an old wooden bowl. "My sainted aunt!" Volstock stopped dead.

eel. I hesitate to make an estimate of its girth round the middle. To my horror, Volstock walked up to the snake and kicked its belly.

"All right," he called; "it's only an old skin! Hullo! What's this?" He held the candle low over the floor. "We are not the first visitors, then."

Bending down, I saw a gruesome sight. A pile of bleached bones lay on the floor.



The bones were evidently human remains—a skull near by told that—they had a curious, twisted look.

Volstock held one of the bones close to the candle, then looked towards the snake skin.

“Ever seen a man’s bones after he has been crushed by a snake?” he asked me casually, holding out the bone.

I took the bone from him and examined it. I confess the sight made me feel rather sick. What I held had been apparently a piece of rib, but it was now bent and twisted beyond recognition. It was impossible to judge how long ago the tragedy had taken place; evidently for many years there had been no living thing in that dark dungeon. Nevertheless, I wished heartily to be back in the open air. The place seemed filled with a strange sinister influence. In my imagination I could see the glittering eyes of the monster, whose skin now lay stretched along the floor, watching our movements.

“Come over here!” called Volstock, who had gone forward. “See,” he said, as I joined him, “*that’s* what he came down to get.”

He pointed to a box in the corner. The box was of wood, heavily clamped with iron. We tried to lift it, but it was too heavy, and seemingly impossible to break open, for a massive lock fastened the lid.

Volstock put the candle on the ground, so that the light illuminated the box, then, going a few feet away, drew his revolver, knelt on the ground, and took careful aim at the lock. The report of the revolver echoed like a thunder-clap in the cellar, and the candle went out.

In the darkness I heard him swear. Apparently he had no matches, though he believed he had a box in the saddle-bag on his horse.

“Good job I shoot straight!” he called in the darkness. “I’ve broken the lock, anyway. There’s something inside all right, too. Come here. Feel there.”

I put my hand into the box and felt what seemed to be a layer of small, round pebbles.

For some time the low rumble of thunder had reached the cellar, and now a deafening crash broke upon the air, followed immediately by the frightened whinny of a horse.

Volstock listened. “Something is upsetting the horses, *che*—maybe the lightning.”

“We had better get down to them. We don’t want them to break away; we have no means of getting back.”

Volstock made for the trap-door. I followed him.

As we came into the clearing where we had left the horses, we saw a horrid spectacle. Volstock’s horse lay dragged to the ground in the coils of an enormous snake. My horse, half mad with fear, tugged at his head-stall, kicking, plunging, rearing, fighting frantically to break away. The monstrous size of the snake was evident from the fact that it had been able to throw its coils completely round the horse’s belly. It must have measured thirty feet at least. Never in any zoological gardens or museum had I seen a snake of similar size.

“What is it?” I asked Volstock.

Volstock stared at the snake, his eyes wide with interest. He took my arm. “That, *che*, is one of the great water snakes of South America. You might be out here years without ever seeing one—they live away up country where few white men ever go. ‘Spect the bad weather has driven him ashore. Well, he’s finished my horse, anyway. Let’s get the other nag away, and come back and attend to him.”

We led the horse up to the high ground near the temple wall, and returned to deal with the snake. The wretched horse was by now dead; indeed, one squeeze of those fearful coils had been enough.

The great anaconda lay twined round its prey, evil and sinister. Volstock drew his revolver.

“What are you going to do?” I asked.

“Shove this down his ugly throat.”

Volstock tapped his revolver.

Next moment I felt a blow on the shoulder, stumbled, and found Volstock dragging me rapidly along the pathway.

“Whew!” he said. “That was a near thing. He’d have got you if I hadn’t pushed you out of the way.”

“Got me?” I asked. “What?”

“There was another of them there, just by that tree, bigger than the first. ‘Spect it’s his mate. We just want to watch where we are stepping.”

We drew our revolvers and approached the snake. Then we both stopped short. Three huge snakes now lay coiled on the grass, and as we stood there two more slithered out of the water. They were monsters all of them, bigger than the first. The hunter’s instinct thrilled me as I realised I was seeing with my own eyes the fabulously large Central American snakes of which I had heard.

“No wonder the cattle don’t swim out



here to graze," said Volstock. "This island seems what you might call inhabited."

Now another flash of lightning cut the sky, so blinding that instinctively we both put our hands to our eyes. A mighty crash of thunder followed, shaking the very earth on which we stood. And then the rain fell torrentially, as though the whole heavens were one vast tilted bucket splashing on to the parched ground.

The sight was weird to a degree—trees swaying, branches crashing, mighty peals of thunder, lightning glinting on the bodies of the great water snakes intent on their evil work. For they had pulled down the second horse, too, now, while we stood there, powerless to prevent them.

Now, instead of one or even two or three snakes, there were fully a score. The island seemed alive with them. Huge, loathsome-looking brutes, some lay coiled placidly, others slithered round the horse.

Volstock and I looked at one another. I think the same thought flashed through each of our minds. What would the next object of attack be after the horses?

The question was quickly answered. One snake, bigger than all the others, slowly uncoiled. Foot by foot the great body straightened, and in leisurely, ghastly fashion he approached.

Instinctively we both stepped back. The snake increased his pace, and now another moved and then another.

We backed up the path towards the temple. At best it was only a temporary measure. We were trapped on that island, trapped like a wretched rabbit thrust into the glass case of a zoo.

Watching the snakes approach, a kind of queer fascination seized me. It seemed to me I was hardly living through a real experience. A grip on my arm made me start. Volstock was beside me. For the first time since I had known him, his face was white.

"It's no use standing there like a stuck pig, man!" he said sharply. "Come on!"

Yes, but "come on" where? We retreated across the courtyard and climbed on to the highest bit of wall there was.

The big snake who was leading slithered through the gateway. Both of us knew that the wall on which we were standing was no protection at all. On he came till he was in the middle of the yard. Suddenly he hesitated. He had come to the opening of the cellar below.

What smell floated up to him from there, what mysterious link with his own people, we shall never know. But suddenly the brute seemed to lose all interest in us. He hovered over the dark opening, thrusting his head in and giving a queer wriggling movement of his loathsome body.

Other snakes approached, too, but none went further than their comrade. They seemed to have lost interest in us and grown curiously placid.

However, another danger threatened. The river was rising so rapidly that it seemed literally to be racing up to our feet. If things continued as they were, in a short time the island would be under water.

Volstock realised this. He looked anxious, and for a moment I thought that for the first time since I had known him I saw fear in his eyes.

I did him an injustice. No sense of fear had brought that peculiar staring expression to his face.

"There's that blasted box still down there," he said, looking at the trap-door.

There we were sitting in the company of a score of deadly snakes on the last little bit of an island which was rapidly being submerged, our horses dead, no hope of reaching shore, but, as Volstock said, there was the box of treasure—if treasure it was—still in the cellar.

Frankly, I had forgotten the box.

"Wonder if I could scare those brutes away," he said, climbing down from the wall. "They can't do much; there are no stumps for them to get their tails round, and they can't take hold of you unless they can get support."

Whether he was right I do not know, only personally I would not have cared to have tried. For though the snakes seemed placid enough if left alone, the moment Volstock approached, their manner became very different. The great snake lying over the trap-door raised his head, swaying backwards and forwards as snakes do before they attack. He seemed a sort of self-constituted guardian of the treasure.

That Volstock would have attacked those brutes I have no doubt, had not Nature intervened. All this while the river had been rising rapidly. The water was now lapping the foot of the wall. Suddenly a mighty volume of water enveloped us—we heard afterwards a dam above had broken—and we found ourselves swept from the island. Somehow—I should not have been able to write this tale had it been other-



wise—bruised and battered by floating trees to which we clung, we reached the shore.

And that really is the end of the story, for we never found those emeralds. When we went back to the island, all vestiges of the temple, even the masonry of the cellar, had been washed away.

Only one little fact, which I subsequently learned, may be of interest. Knowing that in old times the Indians worshipped stars, sticks, rivers, and all manner of strange things, I wanted to find out the particular

deity of the tribe whose temple we had visited.

Donato was reticent, holding in contempt the superstitions of his forebears. However, after a glass or two of *cana*, he consented to say this much—

“The god they worshipped in that temple, señor? The blessed saints may know! I do not, but I have heard men say it was a snake.”

And that was all the information I could get about the lost tribe of snake-charming Indians of the Parana.



## A LANDSCAPE.

**F**ROM leafy poplars thrilling through the cone,  
As though therefrom a flock of birds had flown,  
There falls each separate image, very lone

On the swift mirror of the drowsed canal.  
Beyond its one arch, lo! the magical  
Full moon climbs clear above the old bridge-wall,

And slowly mounts to the meridian height  
Laden with her full round of silver light,  
Calm, with a melancholy infinite:

By field and lane and hedge now falls the noon  
That we have dreamt of the enamoured moon;  
No footstep fares along the still lagoon.

Yet through the air vague rumours faint or live,  
While one clear voice—the water through the sieve—  
Sings to the stars, a happy fugitive.

WILFRID THORLEY.





"Don't look at me like that. I'm not a murderer yet."

# THE SNAIL

By ELLA MARY FERGUSON

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

**F**ELIX RUNSTABLE locked the cupboard where he had just carefully arranged a number of jars and instruments. Then he numbered and fastened together the scattered sheets, covered with figures and cabalistic symbols, on which the results of his work were recorded, and locked them away.

This done, he took down a depressed-looking hat from a peg in the corner and went out, also locking the door with a double turn. All this care was, perhaps, not necessary now, but he had got into the habit during the years of the War, when

he was raking into Nature's most hidden secrets, hoping to find something—gas, explosive, or some as yet undreamt-of power—which would bring his country's enemies to their knees. He had toiled like one possessed in those days, and the habit of working at all hours of the day had remained with him. The cleaners in the great institution where a professorship secured him room and apparatus for his experiments, accepted him as a queer fellow whose room must not be touched except by his laboratory factotum, and who might be seen at any hour of the day or night passing



absent-mindedly in or out of the great entrance door. At thirty-five he had already acquired the beginnings of that fossildom which is sure to attack all men of science sooner or later; and to the young men who sang and shouted about the college there was little to distinguish him from, for instance, the great Dr. Jumble, who won his fame in 1880 by his world-famed discovery concerning the private life of the red blood-corpuscles.

But he was only thirty-five, and in some ways was as young as he had been at twenty-five. Those ten years had been spent in one long task which linked them together and made them seem no more than ten months.

As he took down his hat a ray of spring sunshine fell on it. Felix frowned. He was not an untidy man, and the sight of the thick dust on the rim annoyed him, though not so much as it would have done if it had been on one of his carefully cherished instruments.

"What a wreck!" he said to himself. "I really must remember to get a new one. It doesn't do to get eccentric in my position. I shall have the students making jokes about my hat, if I am not careful."

He did not know that there had been bets for weeks as to whether he would brush his hat before Easter.

A little of the dust was removed by the simple process of knocking the hat against his knee. Then Felix Runstable tossed it on to his head and forgot all about it. His mind was once more going over the figures and symbols on the papers locked up in his desk, trying always to find that little crack in Mother Nature's defences through which her child may put in a greedy hand and steal one more of her secrets.

His way home led him across the Park to a flat in West Kensington where he lived with his mother and a constantly changing procession of lady-helps. Mrs. Runstable had a "message" to the women of England, and was often absent on lecturing and propaganda tours. Thus her housekeeping had frequently to be left to a deputy. To the choice of this deputy she brought her great mind to bear.

"I want somebody capable of initiative," she would explain every time to the sorely-tried clerk of the registry office. "At the same time she must be adaptable, for when I am at home I naturally take up the reins again. I want a lady, or, at least, a well-brought-up girl or woman of good education.

Our flat is small, and she must share our family life. She must be young enough to be strong and hearty, but do not send me anybody good-looking—none of your flighty girls. I have an unmarried son, and it is best to be on the safe side, especially as I have frequently to leave them alone together."

"Very well, madam," the woman would sigh. "If I have anybody who would be likely to suit, I will ask her to call on you."

From time to time an unfortunate girl would drift into the house and make a languid attempt to meet Mrs. Runstable's requirements. But generally mother and son were at the mercy of an Irish charwoman, who scrubbed and cleaned with more zeal than discretion, and whose cooking always left them both so hungry that they had to go out to dinner at a neighbouring restaurant to keep the spark of life alight.

On the day when the sunray fell on Professor Runstable's hat a new "help" was expected, with an incongruously cheerful name, Fay Merriman.

"She seems stupid," Mrs. Runstable had told her son that morning at breakfast. "But they are all that, and as she has absolutely no home or family anywhere, perhaps she will stop here a bit."

"Perhaps so," murmured Felix, and, as usual, thought no more about the matter.

But the girl was thinking about him.

She *was* plain, there was no mistake about that—large, expressionless brown eyes in a plump but pasty face, a short clumsy figure, badly dressed in colours which made her dark eyes and hair look gloomier than they were by nature. Her only good point was a pair of well-shaped intelligent hands—such clever hands they looked that they gave the lie direct to the lumpish stupidity of her general appearance.

As she arranged her few poor things in the little room which fell to the lot of the lady-help in the Runstables' flat, she thought deeply and despondently about the future.

"If only they turn out interesting! The old lady is a tartar and a cat, but she's not a fool. I'm so tired of fools! The whole thing turns on the son. A young professor—I wonder. If only he can talk sense! Oh, the cackling of those women at the hostel! I should have gone mad if I had stayed there another day. I must—I must be where I can hear people talk intelligently at least. It's more to me than bread."

Fay went off to the kitchen as soon as



she was ready, and looked about her for something with which to prepare dinner. Not a sign of a crumb to be seen anywhere, only dirty, neglected saucepans and suspicious-looking crockery all over the place. The clever hands set to work and reduced the room to something resembling order, but still nothing for dinner, and Mrs. Runstable had said it must be served at seven o'clock, as her son liked to have a long evening afterwards.

"The old cat said I must have initiative," muttered Fay angrily. She was longing to slam the kitchen door behind her and enjoy herself with a book—there were piles of all sorts in the young Professor's room.

"I must get something to make a dinner with," she decided. "Feed the beast! He hasn't had much to tempt him from this kitchen lately."

A hunt in various drawers disclosed tattered household books—butcher and dairy, at least. These shops were quite ready to supply her on credit, and pointed out the baker and greengrocer. At seven o'clock a good dinner was ready—nothing extraordinary, but such a meal as Felix and his mother had not eaten for many a long day.

The Professor arrived just before the hour. As usual he took a book from his study and sat down to the table at once without saying a word. Mrs. Runstable had not yet come in, and Fay was in doubt what to do. She moved about the dining-room, rearranged the few things she had been able to find for the table.

"Horrid pig!" she muttered to herself, looking at the tall, pale-faced man seated at the foot of the table. "Anybody would think I was a machine moving about in the room. No, he'd be interested in that. He takes no more notice than if I were a fly. Ugh! I'd like to sting him!"

"Shall I serve," she asked abruptly, when there was really nothing more to do, "or will you wait till Mrs. Runstable comes in?"

No answer—only a leaf turned over with great deliberation.

Fay's dark eyes lost their sullen glow and blazed with temper. "What a pig!"

Without further attempt to establish communications, she marched into the kitchen, slamming both doors with considerable emphasis. Dishing up the dinner, she piled everything on a large tray and staggered along to the dining-room with it. This time she made so much noise that

Felix looked up absently. For a moment he watched with unobservant eyes the serried ranks of dishes advancing into the room, then, realising that they were being carried by such a very inadequate pair of arms, he leapt to his feet and came to the rescue.

"What on earth——" he began. "My goodness, you as nearly as possible had the lot on the ground!"

"Well, whose fault would that have been?" burst out Fay. "You sit there and don't answer when I ask you a simple question. There's the dinner. I've done my duty, but everything is done in this house to make things difficult, it seems to me."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Felix. "You know, I'm most awfully sorry. I was buried in my book. I never heard a word. Look here, let me help you with all those dishes. Heavens, what a feast!"

They sat down together at the table. The Professor was evidently so terrified at the idea of serving that Fay had to do it. She placed a steaming plateful of food before him, and he set to work. Instinctively his hand went out for his book. Twice he took it up, then closed it again with a wistful look at Fay and a deep sigh. Then the telephone bell rang. It was Mrs. Runstable to say she would not be in till ten, and would then have a snack of something cold.

When Fay came back into the dining-room, the book was comfortably lodged against the water-jug and the Professor once more lost in it.

She changed the plates and gave him some pudding. Not a word but a murmured "Thank you!" The food seemed to please him, though, for he ate it with appetite. When Fay saw him chasing round his plate for a last morsel of pudding which he had already eaten, she quietly gave him a new supply, which followed the first unnoticed. Cheese had the same fate.

Fay sat watching him, scarcely eating a mouthful. At first her eyes were brimming over with tears of rage, but towards the end of the strange meal she could have wept for pity. Professor Felix Runstable, the famous chemist, made an oddly pathetic appeal to her stormy heart as he sat at the end of the table. She noticed that his tie was frayed from too long wear, and that its hideous brown shade could never have suited him, that his coat collar wanted brushing, that his hair was badly cut and his moustache needed trimming. But under and behind all this she saw a good-looking,



fair-haired man, tall and broad, though his shoulders were rounded by long stooping over experiments, a man, too, who had a kindly nature as well as a great brain.

"But what's the good of it all? I might as well be sitting beside a snail," meditated Fay.

When a blind search on his plate revealed nothing more to eat, Felix rose, bowed absently towards a vaguely seen figure at the side of the table, and made for the door.

"You shan't go like that!" muttered Fay between her teeth. She darted round the table.

"Will you have your coffee here or in your study?" she asked, resolutely barring the way.

"Why, to tell you the truth," replied the Professor, coming out of his world of thought with a tremendous effort, "I don't remember ever having had coffee at home. Can you really make me some?"

"Certainly. I will bring it to your study in a few minutes," replied Fay in her most business-like way.

At the door the Professor wavered. He seemed to want to say something, but he changed his mind and went down the corridor to his study. Here Fay discovered him, sitting in a shabby, comfortable chair, with his feet on another and the inevitable book in his hand. He looked up with a startled expression as the door opened, and his frown said as plainly as words: "Dash it all, if this woman is going to come through doors with trays in her hands all the time, life won't be worth living!"

There must have been something soothing, however, in the smell of the coffee, for his face grew calm again. He drank off the first cup almost at a draught. Fay took it from him and filled it again.

"Aren't you having some?" he asked in an unusually alert tone. "It's really very good. I used to be fond of coffee."

"I make it rather well, I've been told," replied Fay with apparent calm, though her heart was beating fast. Was it possible that he was already coming out of his shell?

"I think you are very clever," remarked the Professor, looking at her as if she were a strange chemical compound which might begin at any moment to bubble or change colour. "Was it you who cooked the dinner? It was remarkably nice. I'm really awfully obliged to you for taking all that trouble."

"But that is my job," laughed Fay, her

gloomy face lighting up in a most remarkable way.

The Professor looked at her, once more with a frown, but this time it was one of perplexity.

"You look very young to live here. Did you only come to-day?" he said. "I suppose— Of course, I don't know anything about it, but isn't this rather a dull place for a girl of your age? I wouldn't like you to be unhappy here. We've always had—at least, I think so—older people. I never really noticed."

Fay's heart was bursting with pride. He had actually come out of his shell enough to see her.

"I shan't be dull," she replied decidedly. "There is a great deal of work to do, and then—I love reading. I wonder if you would sometimes let me read one of your books."

"I haven't any books you would care for." That was the snub direct, but it did not hurt much. The eyes under the brows, drawn together by the perplexed frown, still had their expression of puzzled kindness. "But I think my mother has a Mudie subscription. I'm sure she will be pleased to let you read anything you like." He took up his book with an air of finality.

"Good night," said Fay, rising and taking up the tray.

There was no answer. The Professor had slipped back into the very depths of his shell.

Several weeks passed in this way. Both Felix and his mother improved in health and appearance under Fay's *régime*. Mrs. Runstable thanked her lucky star every day. Well-cooked meals appeared at the right moment as if by magic, and, strangely enough, the household bills were less than they had ever been before.

"You are a born cook," she said one day to Fay, when she had begun to lose her first fears about the "new broom" losing its virtue.

"That I'm not," contradicted Fay bluntly. "I was born for quite other things, but as long as I cook, I'm going to cook decently."

"I hope you are not thinking of leaving us." There was a positive quaver in the old lady's voice.

"No, not at present," was the calm reply, "though I think you will agree with me that my University education is rather wasted here. But there is no work for an educated woman to do at present in England, so here I am."

"And we are the gainers." There was



no doubt digestible food had wonderfully softened the old lady's temper. "But think, my dear girl, all the same, you do help valiantly in the world's tasks. How much more able I am to devote myself to my WORK"—the capitals were positively audible—"since you take the burden of housekeeping from my shoulders. And my son was saying to me only this morning that he felt so much better lately than he used to. He said work was a positive treat nowadays."

"*Did* he?" asked Fay eagerly.

"You must not forget," went on Mrs. Runstable sententiously, "that all work is noble in its way, and household work requires as much intelligence as my son's researches or even *my* work."

"I dare say," agreed Fay, her old sullen expression well to the fore. "It is considerably less interesting, though."

However, she was not ill pleased with her lot. The Professor and his mother appealed to a protective instinct in her which had never yet been awakened. Up to the present, from earliest childhood, she had always been on the defensive. She rather enjoyed surprising them by little attentions. It is true that nine times out of ten the Professor did not observe them, but the tenth time he would be so grateful that it made up for all the others. There were no unbrushed hats or coats nowadays, for instance; but of that he had no idea, nor that his students were betting on the possibility of his being in love, so intrigued were they by his changed appearance.

Naturally, he was not in the least in love with Fay. You cannot be in love with a vague figure that moves about in your house, ministering to your comfort, it is true, but more or less in the way that a gas-stove or a vacuum-cleaner does. She was part of the furniture of the home to which he retired for rest and food, a remarkably nice recent addition to it, for which he was duly grateful to that wonderful woman his mother.

Fay accepted this situation at first with a certain grim sense of humour. Falling in love was the last thing that preoccupied her. All her life she had only cared for intellect—the senses were taboo. As she realised the intense mental activity which lay behind the Professor's habitual dreaminess, she had but one desire—to pierce his defences and share that with him. No thought of the possibility of any sentiment awakening either on his part or on hers ever entered her mind.

Yet there came an evening when, as she lay in bed remembering how the Professor had thanked her for a neat piece of mending to one of the leather cases he used in his work, tears filled her eyes and an intense longing for a share in the world's happiness, the ordinary, peaceful, unexciting happiness of quite commonplace men and women, surged up in her breast and threatened to choke her.

"Thump, thump!" went her heart, and "Boom, boom!" the pulses in her temples.

"I'm behaving like a lovesick coster girl because that man opened his eyes for once and looked as if he saw me," she told herself with a feeling of such extreme self-contempt that her tears were dried by the blazing heat of her tingling cheeks.

The next day she was busy in the kitchen, feeling rather down on her luck, wondering if she were wise to stay on in this menial position where all her talents were rusting, when she heard the front door open and hurrying steps tearing through all the rooms of the flat. Mrs. Runstable had left early on a lecturing tour of some weeks; the Professor never came home till evening. It must be a burglar! Taking the kitchen poker, she ran out, hoping to get to the telephone before he could stop her.

"Where's my mother?" a voice, harsh with distress, cried as she reached the hall.

"Oh, Professor, I thought it was a burglar! Mrs. Runstable left an hour ago. She caught the ten-fifty from Victoria."

"Where has she gone? How can I get to her? You are so clever. What *shall* I do?"

"Tell me what is the matter, first of all," said Fay firmly. "Why, you are dripping with perspiration!"

"I ran all the way from the College. Mother has gone off with a bottle of strong corrosive acid. She thinks it is her throat lotion. I got them both from the Stores yesterday, and gave her the wrong bottle. You know, she always uses that lotion before she speaks at a meeting. This stuff will kill her for certain."

Fay sank back against the wall in horror.

"Don't look at me like that. I'm not a murderer yet, though I shall be soon unless you can help me."

"But, my dear man, go after her this very moment! Telegraph, telephone, *do* something to get in touch with her before this evening! She is not likely to use it before about seven o'clock. You've heaps of time."



"You don't understand. I know no more than the man in the moon where she has gone. I'm sure she told me, but I don't always listen very well when my mind is full of something else."

"You never listen at all. It is perfectly ridiculous the way you live," replied Fay

Runstable was delivering her message that evening at Portsmouth.

"Her agent will know what hotel she



"Felix was past words."

severely. "Perhaps we shall find a programme of the lectures in her room somewhere. Let's come and look."

After some search they found that Mrs.

generally puts up at," suggested Fay. "Lecturing people are always run by an agent. She must have one."

"I don't know who it is, then," replied



Felix, and he looked so miserable and so guilty that Fay did not say a word to drive home the lesson.

"Then we'll get down to Portsmouth as quick as we can and make inquiries," she decided, marching away to get her hat and



"Look!" she said in an awe-struck whisper. The liquid had splashed over as she set the glass down roughly, and on the marble top was a series of small holes wherever the acid had touched."



coat. "Keep your head, that's the great thing."

"You'll really come with me?" gasped Felix.

"Rather; you might get thinking again," replied Fay briefly.

They just caught a good train due to arrive late in the afternoon. During the journey they sat in opposite corners of the compartment. The Professor's eyes were fixed on Fay as if she were the one sure thing in his crumbling universe. Sometimes his hand strayed to the pocket where his book lay as usual, but he drew it back and once more concentrated his attention on the dark-eyed sombre face before him. He looked so unspeakably miserable and frightened that at last Fay could bear it no longer. She bent forward and put one of her clever little hands on his knee.

"Keep up your heart," she whispered, with a smile which softened and illumined her sullen face so that it looked to Felix like an angel's bending towards him. "I am sure we shall be in time."

With a sudden impulsive movement, Felix raised the hand to his lips and pressed a kiss on the pretty capable fingers.

"Oh, I say," he exclaimed in dismay, dropping the hand like a hot potato, "I do most sincerely beg your pardon! I don't know what made me do that. I've never done such a thing in my life before."

"I can quite believe it," replied Fay, and laughed—the jolliest, cheeriest laugh imaginable.

The Professor laughed, too—he did not quite know why. And with that laugh he not only came right out of his shell, but kicked it away behind him. He often felt cold and bare afterwards, but he never had the slightest wish to go back.

Once arrived in Portsmouth, the two stood for a minute amidst the bustle and clamour, not knowing how to begin their search. It was Fay who hailed a taxi.

"We want to find an elderly lady who is staying here the night. She will probably be in a quiet hotel somewhere near the Albion Hall. Do you know the neighbourhood well?"

"Rather, miss. You come alonger me."

They tried several places, with no success. The caretaker of the hall knew nothing of the lady's whereabouts, suggested she was staying with friends.

"It's all my fault!" groaned Felix. "If only I had listened, been the least bit interested! I know nothing whatever about

my own mother. But, really, I do care about her. It isn't want of affection. I've just let myself get buried in my work. It's awfully absorbing."

"Of course it is!" cried Fay. "And Mrs. Runstable is so proud of you. She would be the last to fancy herself neglected. Still, it would be nice if you were more alive and took an interest in your surroundings."

"Then there's you," went on the poor fellow despairingly. "There you've been slaving for us both all these months, making everything so comfortable, and I've scarcely known you were there most of the time. Yet when I'm in trouble, there you are, kind and clever as an angel. Oh, help me to find her in time and I'll show you how grateful I can be!"

"I don't believe she is in any of these back streets he is taking us to now," exclaimed Fay. "We'll try the big hotels near the station. That's just the practical sort of thing Mrs. Runstable would be likely to do."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Yes, the lady went out this afternoon, but she has been back some time. She must be in her room dressing, for she has ordered her dinner early."

Fay seized the chambermaid's hand and wrung it.

"Which is her room? Show me at once. There is not a minute to lose. . . . Number thirty-two, along this corridor? Thank you."

Like a flash of lightning Fay flew down the long corridor, her heart beating fast. Her knock received no answer. With a sudden sick feeling of fear she opened the door and ran in. Mrs. Runstable looked round, a glass of milky-looking water in her hand.

"What on earth——" she began.

Fay snatched the glass from her and put it violently on the washstand.

"You were just going to gargle your throat!" she cried in a tragic voice, and burst into a storm of sobs.

"My dear girl!" Mrs. Runstable stood aghast, half laughing, half angry. "Now, what is all this nonsense, and what are you doing here? Pull yourself together and tell me."

Dashing away her tears, Fay turned to the washstand and took up the glass.

"Look!" she said in an awe-struck whisper. The liquid had splashed over as she set the glass down roughly, and on the marble top was a series of small holes



wherever the acid had touched. "Oh, look! That's what I came for—at least, the Professor came, only I happened to get here first."

"Felix here? . . . Why, my dear boy, what have you been doing to yourself? You look like a ghost. . . . All this excitement is very bad preparation for public speaking. Now, tell me as quickly and calmly as you can what is the meaning of this strange scene."

But Felix was past words. He put his arms round his mother and hugged her as he had not done since his first term at school.

"I as nearly as possible killed you, mother!" he burst out at last. "There's a most ghastly acid in that bottle I gave you, not your lotion. Good God! You were just going to use it?"

He stared with starting eyes at the marble, where the holes were gradually growing in size and depth.

"Miss Merriman took it from my hand a minute ago," said Mrs. Runstable. "I wondered why it was in a different bottle."

Her eyes went from one horror-stricken face to the other. Gradually she understood what it all meant. For a few moments she stared at the tumbler of acid and the spots of liquid which told such a terrible story, with looks as aghast as the two younger people's. Then she gathered herself together and with royal calm stepped across to where Fay was clinging to the bedpost, and kissed her solemnly on the forehead.

"The women of England thank you, though they will never know that through your humble agency I have been spared to carry on my message," she said in her most stately fashion. "Now let us put this distressing matter entirely out of our minds. I must collect my strength and thoughts for the task that lies before me this evening. I feel I shall be inspired to-night."

With gestures worthy of a high priestess among the ancient Druids, she swept them along with her to the dining-room.

"You must stop here to-night, of course," she announced. "Dinner is only ready for me, so I will send you away to choose your rooms and make the best arrangements you can."

Fay and the Professor slipped away like two children.

"I'm just going out to buy a tooth-brush and so on," said Fay, when rooms had been allotted to them. "I'll see you at dinner."

She bought a tooth-brush first because

she was by nature strictly truthful. Then she hurried along to a shop she had noticed at the corner when looking for the hotel. The porter was just pulling down the blinds. Fay dodged under his arm and dashed into the shop.

"Please sell me a jumper," she said to one of the girls who were busy covering up the show-tables. "I want one so badly. It is that one in the window in dark brown silk knitted stuff with some old gold and crimson about it. Will you get it out for me? Do be an angel!"

"Why, of course I will," replied the girl good-humouredly. "It's just your size and colouring."

With a very light purse, but a heart just as light, Fay dashed back to the hotel.

Half an hour later Felix was sitting at a little table in the corner of the big dining-room, wishing Fay would come, when a fairy-like person in a most beautiful Oriental garment sat down opposite to him.

"Oh, excuse me——" he began, then saw that it was Fay, the girl he loved with every fibre of his being, as he suddenly realised.

"You look—so lovely—so wonderful!" he stammered. "You're all changed and yet just the same. I've had glimpses of you—sometimes—looking just like that."

"That was when you poked your head out of your shell, Mr. Snail," replied Fay briskly. "Generally you only saw the little that was visible through the opening."

"I believe you're right," replied the Professor humbly. "Won't you help me to learn to do without my shell?"

"You lost it on the way here," declared Fay, feeling that her jumper gave her courage to say or do absolutely anything. "It took an earthquake to get you out. It's up to you to stop out."

After dinner they went for a walk across the common and round the Castle. On the way Felix poured out the story of his need and longing.

"I'm a perfect ass about everyday life. I don't dare to ask you to marry me, for fear I should not know how to be a decent husband to you. And yet, if you won't have me, the world will be a gloomy empty hole without a ray of light or a gleam of happiness. You've got me out of my shell, as you say. Will you be kind to me now I'm out, Fay, dear, beautiful Fay? I'll do everything I can to make you happy. And I do love you with my whole heart. I've never looked at another girl."

"That's why you think I'm beautiful,"



replied Fay gloomily. "Oh, Felix, I must tell you! I should despise myself all my life if I didn't. I wanted you to think I looked nice. I went out before dinner and spent nearly every penny I had on this lovely jumper."

"I didn't notice it," replied Felix calmly. Then a ray of light shot into his mind. "You wanted to look nice—for me?"

Thereupon he kissed her several times, and after that they did not talk any more about making one another happy—both were so full of their own happiness.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Runstable found her son sitting up for her.

"It was wonderful," she told him. "I was, as I said I should be, positively inspired. I saw it in the faces of the audience. Think no more about the mistake you made. Providence has turned it from a storm-cloud to a pillar of light in the lives of many."

"It has brought a great light into my life, too, mother," said Felix, seizing her hand as she strode up and down the room. "I am going to get married."

"Married? To whom? Felix, I hope you have not been caught by one of those insignificant young persons who mock at my message—flippertigibbets!"

"No, mother, nobody like that. I hope you will be pleased."

"You should marry somebody like that sterling-hearted girl Fay Merriman. But men are so blind. You only see a plain awkward little thing."

"How can you?" cried the Professor indignantly. "Why, she's lovely!"

Mrs. Runstable put her two hands on her son's shoulders and looked at him with an unusual tenderness on her rather masculine face.

"I congratulate you, my son!" said she. "Please God I shall one day have a granddaughter to carry on my message."



## THE BLESSED TYRANT.

**A**S in a mist I see the face  
Of her in whom my heart rejoices;  
As in a dream of light and grace,  
I hear the gentlest of all voices.

Not when long absence and the pain  
Of tender yearning unrequited  
Bring to the senses once again  
How sweet it was to be united.

But when, the briefest space apart,  
I look for her and cannot find her  
Who hath engraven on my heart  
That second self she leaves behind her.

Thus do I know what blessed power  
Is hers, to make me or unmake me,  
Who binds me closer ev'ry hour  
She seems as if she would forsake me.

LEOPOLD SPERO.



# THE MAN WHO WAS DEAD

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

"THAT is Mr. Massarin," said Seymour. "He can help us to find Charlie, if anybdy can."

They had come through the animal shop, and were at the entrance of what in a normal house would have been the yard. Actually it was large and circular, almost the shape of a circus tent, and its walls were lined with large cages like those of a menagerie. A glass roof covered it in, but the windows had been thrown back to allow the fresh air to enter. Against one of the cages, with his arm inserted through the bars, a man was standing. His neatly-tended white beard gave him a suggestion of age which his fresh colouring and upright build denied. Within the cage a black leopard was lying on its back, purring loudly and playfully clawing the sleeve of the man's coat, what time he stroked it under the chin as one might a cat.

At the sound of Seymour's voice he turned and withdrew his arm, whereat the black leopard, in high dudgeon, leapt to its feet and retired snarling to the back of the cage.

"This is Miss Uylett, the lady I mentioned to you," said Seymour. "My friend Southgate, who has disappeared, is her *fiancé*."

Mr. Massarin held out his hand. Miss Uylett screamed and started back. From somewhere at the back of the cages, what at first sight seemed to be a dwarf negro descended with a rush. It wore a blue velvet bodice trimmed with tarnished silver lace, the short sleeves leaving its hairy black arms bare to the elbow. A tight-fitting child's bonnet, fastened under the chin with a coquettish bow, and a short skirt of bright red tartan check, completed the costume. With amazing agility this apparition leapt up the tail of Mr. Massarin's frock-coat and landed on his shoulder,

whence it gesticulated angrily at the startled visitor.

"Don't be alarmed," said Mr. Massarin soothingly. "It is only Josephine. She is always jealous of strange ladies." He tapped reprovingly the hairy arm that had snuggled confidently round his white head. "Perhaps we had better go to the office," he went on. "We shan't be interrupted there."

Although Mr. Massarin was among the three largest animal dealers in the world, there was nothing imposing about his premises. Externally they took the form of a small three-storied house facing upon a side-street near the London Docks. On one side of the entrance was a small shop-front wherein canaries and grey parrots were displayed; beyond it an archway closed by a shabby wooden gate gave admission to the yard behind. There was not so much as a painted sign to indicate the business carried on; it is true that such a sign would have been unnecessary, seeing that the fame of Mr. Massarin was spread abroad wherever men go down to the sea in ships. To find it you had only to ask the way of any sailorman you might meet coming out of the West India Dock gates, from which it was but a stone's throw.

The office was a little bare room on the first floor above the shop, furnished only with a broad table-desk and an old-fashioned horsehair suite of the kind familiar in the shops of second-hand furniture dealers. Some books of account lay upon a smaller desk under the window, and beside the fireplace was a tall bookcase containing bound yearly volumes of *The Daily Record* newspaper from its commencement, while in the corner a pile of loose copies of the same periodical reached almost to the ceiling.

Mr. Massarin, having motioned his guest



to a chair, sat himself before the desk and gazed at her intently from a pair of dark-grey eyes that were curiously youthful in suggestion.

"Mr. Seymour has already told me about your trouble," he said. "Will you tell me, in your own words, exactly what has happened?"

Miss Uylett hesitated and blushed a little. "There is really very little I can tell you," she said, "except that Captain Southgate, whom I was to have married, has disappeared. Our marriage was fixed for a fortnight ago, but since the third of January I have not heard a word from him, and then only a New Year's card that was not in his own handwriting. I have it here." From her handbag she produced the card—the ordinary conventional greeting—and passed it across the table. Mr. Massarin glanced at it and laid it down before him.

"Mr. Seymour tells me that Captain Southgate went away first of all in August last, some seven months ago. How many times have you seen him since then?"

"Only once," she said sadly. "About a week later. I had a postcard from him—or professing to be from him—about the middle of November. That also is not in his own handwriting. As you will see, he explains it by saying he has had an accident to his right arm and has to write with his left hand. Here it is."

Mr. Massarin glanced at it and laid it beside the New Year's card. "That is all you know?" he asked gently.

Angry tears welled into the girl's dark eyes. "I only know that when I grew anxious at hearing nothing from him, I went to the police. They practically laughed at me, and as good as suggested that it was his way of showing he was tired of me. Then I went to a private detective with practically the same result, although he did say he would make inquiries. That was six weeks ago, and he has done nothing, absolutely nothing. Then Mr. Seymour, who was Charlie's greatest friend, told me about you, and I thought perhaps, even if you couldn't help me, at least you wouldn't laugh at me."

"I certainly see nothing to laugh at," said Mr. Massarin. "Be good, now, or I will send you out of the room!" he said suddenly to Josephine, the little chimpanzee, who, having for a time sat quietly upon his shoulder, had begun to tug gently at his beard as a sign that she wanted attention. He turned towards where Seymour was

standing against the mantelpiece. "Perhaps you will repeat what you have already told me. I may tell you that certain of the dates you mention have already suggested an idea—rather a vague idea at present."

"Well, sir, as I told you, I am not really certain of my dates, because it is six months ago, and my memory has been rotten since the War. About the middle of August I put an advertisement in the paper asking for a job. I am afraid I don't remember the exact words."

"Perhaps I can help you," said Mr. Massarin. "It ran like this, I think: 'Ex-gunner officer, age thirty, seeks work. Can ride, shoot, drive a car, sail a boat. Fond of animals. Ready to go anywhere or do anything.' It appeared on August eighteenth last."

"That's it, sir," said Seymour confusedly. "It sounds rather feeble, but, as you have every reason to know, those are about all the things I am any good at."

"All the same, it made me write to you in the first place," said the old gentleman, smiling.

"That was the 'fond of animals' part of it, and I am afraid I only put that in because I couldn't think of anything else in the world to say."

"Go on," said Mr. Massarin.

"Well, I got two replies to it. One, as you know, was from you. The other was signed only with initials, giving an address care of the paper, and wanting me to answer a lot of questions about my height and complexion and things like that. They wanted two photographs, full face and profile, without a hat on, and I was especially to tell them if I had any kind of a wound on my left shoulder. Well, as you know, the bit of shell I stopped was in the thigh, but I answered the questions as well as I could, and I got an answer back saying that whoever it was was sorry, but they wanted a man who was five feet eleven, while I was only five feet seven. They enclosed a couple of Bradburys to make up for having troubled me unnecessarily, which I thought rather decent of them. I wanted them pretty badly just then."

"You have not those letters, of course?"

"Afraid not. You see, I never thought anything of this sort was going to happen, and I expect I tore them up. Well, the idea struck me that if I wasn't suited to whatever the job was, it might fit Charlie Southgate to a hair. He was my best pal even before the War, you know. We are a



bit like each other to look at—same coloured hair and that sort of thing. "He was a couple of inches taller than I was, and what made it more likely was that he had stopped one in his left shoulder. He was just as much up against things as I was myself, and that same morning—before I came along to see you, in reply to your letter—I told him to put in for it. He did, and, as you know, he got it. He came in the evening after and told me about it. Whoever it was had asked him to meet them in Kensington Gardens by the Peter Pan statue. It was a man and a woman, both of them getting on in life. I remember he told me that the man was some kind of a foreigner, with a black moustache and what he said was a German accent, while, from something she said, he thought the woman was an American, though he couldn't be sure. He said they looked him over and talked to him about general things for a bit, and asked him one or two questions—whether he had done any hunting, and what kinds of boats he had sailed, and what kind of people he knew. He rather thought that would finish him, because he had been in New Zealand for two or three years before the War, and scarcely knew anybody. But, as far as he could see, it pleased them, and they said he would do. Then the old lady gave him a hundred pounds, telling him that fifty was for himself to clinch the bargain, and fifty to get himself a new rig-out. The dear old thing wanted me to take half because I had found him the chance, though, thanks to you, I was as much in luck as he was."

"That was all he told you?"

Seymour wrinkled his forehead. "My memory is so rotten that it is all I can remember. Wait a bit, though. Yes, I remember they wouldn't tell him what he had got to do, but only made him promise that he wouldn't say a word about it—not even to his best friend. It was some little time after that—"

"Exactly a week," put in Miss Uylett, who was obviously growing impatient at her companion's halting phrases. "He had a telegram saying that he was to be at Paddington next morning before eleven, and was to bring yachting things with him. He was to wait under the clock on the departure platform until he was called for."

"Are you sure it was Paddington?"

"It was Paddington," insisted Miss Uylett, as Seymour hesitated. "Do you think I should forget? It was the last

time I saw him. He said something, too, about sailing a five-ton ketch—I think it was—only then he pulled himself up and smiled, and said that he had promised not to tell even me."

"If he went from Paddington, it must have been somewhere on the west or south-west coast," said Mr. Massarin quietly. "The date we have."

"I have just remembered," put in Seymour eagerly. "He told me, before that, he thought he had a chance of some grouse shooting up in Scotland, and of getting some hunting afterwards. I remember because I told him he was going to lead the life of a giddy profiteer and get paid for it."

"And that is absolutely all you can tell me?"

"Absolutely. Neither Miss Uylett—whom he would naturally have written to—nor I have heard a word from him since that card, and—well, naturally, one feels a bit anxious."

"If you will take Miss Uylett to lunch somewhere," said Mr. Massarin paternally, "I would suggest Plumer's in Liverpool Street. If you were back by three, Josephine and I can talk matters over in the meantime."

"What do you think of him?" asked Seymour eagerly, when they had found a seat in the crowded restaurant and succeeded in catching the waiter's eye.

"At least, he didn't laugh at us," she said doubtfully.

"Did you see what he was doing when we went in? That brute is about the savagest thing living, yet he plays with it as if it were a kitten."

"That won't help us to find poor Charlie, I am afraid."

"I haven't finished yet. Another thing is that he never looks at a book—says they are only monuments to human folly. All he ever reads is *The Daily Record*. You saw the files of it in the office. He knows that pretty well by heart—for twenty years back. He has got the most marvellous memory. And then he positively loathes women. It is no end of a compliment—to me really—that he said he would see you. That's why he has Josephine dressed up like that. Says she is the best-looking thing of her sex, and the only one he has ever met who wouldn't let a man down as soon as look at him. I tell you, he's a holy terror on women, is the Colonel."

"That doesn't sound very encouraging, either," said the girl, laughing out loud.



"He's had no end of a queer life," went on the eager champion. "His father was an organ-grinder. Use to go round the country with a monkey. He's got the organ still—one of the funny old things with one leg, that sounds as if it had been badly gassed. He keeps it in his bedroom, and I believe he plays himself to sleep with it sometimes. He must have had a pretty rough time of it. He went about with a circus when his father died, and after a bit he enlisted, went out to India. I have a sort of idea he went native for a bit—lived in the jungle or something. Anyway, that's where he picked up Ram Das. You haven't seen Ram yet, though, have you? Then he started trading in animals and——"

Miss Uylett showed faint signs of impatience. "You know you have told me most of this before, and it is very interesting, of course, but it doesn't tell me how he is going to find Charlie."

"But it does really. It's because he lived in the jungle. He says himself he is more than half an animal through living with them so long. He says he got his memory from them—that an animal only remembers really important things and never forgets them. And he reasons out things in that sort of way, too. He says you have only got to remember the motives an animal has for doing things to know exactly what they are going to do beforehand. And that it's exactly the same with a man, because men themselves are only animals, but a bit nastier in their habits. I could tell you about him for a week. Why, one of the things he likes best is just sitting about and reasoning things out for himself. He has told me how half a dozen murder cases would turn out long before there was any possible way of knowing. I wouldn't mind taking a fair-sized bet that by the time we get back he will be able to tell us exactly where Master Charlie has been hiding himself, and I shouldn't be over and above surprised if he had the old thing sitting there on the sofa waiting for us."

Actually they found the animal dealer alone, so far as human company was concerned, though Josephine was sitting on the table before him, and a curious creature, rather like an enormous guinea-pig, was in the angle of the sofa, wriggling its nostrils amiably, somewhat to Miss Uylett's alarm, which was not appreciably lessened when it leapt to the floor and put its large round head in her lap, even though Seymour whispered to her that it was only a capy-

bara from South America, and the best of company.

Mr. Massarin had taken down the last of the large bound volumes of *The Daily Record* and was poring over it, what time Josephine, who had possessed herself of his spectacles, of which indeed he seemed to have little need, was as busily regarding another part of the broad page. He looked up as they entered. "I have been waiting for you. I have to go out, and I may not be back till late. Seymour, will you see the man from the Marseilles Zoo when he comes—Dunoyer is his name—and tell him I won't sell Sultan unless he gives me a written undertaking to have the cement floors taken up and wood put down instead? It's nothing short of murder to expect any animal to live under such conditions." He looked suddenly across at Miss Uylett. "Would it be convenient for you to call here on Wednesday morning next, at about nine?"

"Do you mean—you have found him? You know where he is. Won't you tell me——"

"On Wednesday morning, then, at nine. Don't forget, Seymour, that the *Cambrai Castle* is expected to dock on Tuesday night with Pottinger's consignment."

Miss Uylett rashly persisted in her inquiries, but at that moment Josephine, perhaps at some secret sign from her protector, set up a chattering so shrill as to drown any merely human voice. Under cover of it Mr. Massarin took his broad, soft hat from its peg and hurried away without further farewell.

Clare Uylett was a modern young woman not at all given to useless fretting, and having her work in a big City office to occupy her mind, but her heart sank more and more on the following day as she reviewed the circumstances of her interview with the eccentric animal dealer. That such a man, almost uneducated, openly condemning literature and preferring, from his own account, the society of wild beasts to that of human beings, could assist her in discovering the whereabouts of her lost lover, appeared to her the mere fantasy of Jack Seymour's enthusiasm, and it was accordingly with only languid interest that she heard that gentleman's report upon the following evening. "The Colonel says you are not to forget Wednesday morning on any account. He didn't get back till late last night, and he was off again, bright and early, this morning, leaving me to mind the shop. He took Josephine with him in her travelling



box, so as not to draw a crowd, and I am blessed if he didn't take the old barrel organ along with him, too. He was all in rags, with a pair of blue spectacles and a perfectly scandalous hat, and when I tried to speak to him about it he snapped my head off, so that I went and hid in the black leopard's cage till he had gone. And I am not to expect him back until I see him."

As it happened, Mr. Seymour found his employer already at home when he returned, sitting at supper in the little parlour beside the shop, Josephine in her own chair facing him, busying herself with a knife and fork almost as dexterously as did her owner. Jack Seymour had not been in his employment for six months without knowing his pet peculiarities. He accordingly waited in the door without speaking until Mr. Massarin should signify his wishes. It was not until Josephine, having finished her supper and carefully untied the napkin which graced her neck, had descended from her chair and flung herself into Jack's arms with a clatter of welcome, that the old gentleman looked up. "You had better sleep here to-night, Seymour," he said. "I shall want you early in the morning. We leave Liverpool



"We stopped by the little door, and Ram Das took off his shoes again and started climbing an angle of the wall, just as a monkey might, helping himself by the ivy."



Street at eight. I have told Ram Das to make you comfortable in the spare room. I shall want you to wear your black tail coat and a bowler hat, and to bring along the little brief bag that is under the desk in the office."

"Are we going to a funeral, sir?" hazarded Seymour, shocked at the prospect of a country journey in such attire; but Mr. Massarin had already fallen into a brown study, and did not answer him.

It was with little hope in her heart that Clare Uylett rang the old-fashioned bell-pull on the door of the little house in Snyder Street upon the following Wednesday morning. It was answered by an elderly man, dressed in gaiters and breeches as might have been an English stableman, but from his features and complexion evidently a native of India. He greeted her with a friendly smile, but without speaking, and led her, by way of a corridor branching from the main hall, to a little flight of wooden stairs, and so upwards to a door on the third floor, looking towards the back of the house. There he stood aside and, throwing it open with a ceremonious bow, "Missy Uylett," he said, "to see Honourable Captain Southgate," and so vanished.

Clare's heart leapt within her, so that for a moment a haze grew before her eyes. As it cleared away, a familiar and rather reproachful voice greeted her. "What did I tell you? The Colonel did it with twelve hours to spare." And Seymour, with scarcely less ceremony than the Hindu had shown, motioned her towards the bed, whereon, propped up by pillows and looking indeed but a shadow of his former self, was the lover she had mourned as lost.

"It's as much a mystery to me as it is to you," he whispered faintly, when Seymour, assuming the airs of a male nurse, intervened to check their too protracted enthusiasm. "All I know is that I was precious near crocking when old Father Christmas with Man Friday and this old scoundrel turned up out of nowhere and carried me off in a chariot of fire or something of that sort. Better ask Jack about it."

"You'll crock now if you don't do as you are told," said his stern attendant, making, however, a reassuring grimace for Clare's benefit. "Doctor's just gone," he added, "and, according to him, the Colonel was only just about in time."

"But what is it? Oh, Charlie, what have you been doing?"

"Playing at being the idle rich," murmured the sick man faintly but cheerfully, while Seymour added: "Mopping up arsenic by the pint, according to the doctor."

It was not, however, until the arrival of a professional nurse, sent by the doctor, to whom Jack handed over his charge with almost as much solemnity as though he were a battery of field guns, that Clare heard the happenings of the past two days.

"Where is Mr. Massarin?" she asked, as he led the way to the little parlour behind the shop. "I want to thank him."

"I doubt if you will get the chance. He's gone off to the Docks himself on purpose to pick up a cargo of boa-constrictors and crocodiles and man-eating tigers, and the deuce knows what. He'd rather live with them for a year than talk to you for five minutes. So you'll have to put up with what I can tell you. It was like this. We went off to Liverpool Street and caught an express down to Ipswich. He had made me dress in a bowler hat and a tail coat, with a little black bag, just as if I was a lawyer's clerk going to serve a writ on some poor devil, and he turned up himself with his best frock-coat and neater than I have seen him for years, looking the very spit of a Methodist minister, if you know what I mean. Well, there was a Ford waiting for us at Ipswich, and we went off in that for a good deal over an hour—rather pretty, flat country, with a lot of water about and the smell of the sea in the air. I suppose we must have gone a good twenty miles when we came to a long park wall with trees peeping over it, and at one place, where the road crossed a bridge, we had a glimpse of a big house standing on a sort of knoll. The Colonel glanced up at it and nodded. 'That's where your friend is staying,' he said under his breath, in the sort of way he has when he doesn't want to be asked questions, so I imitated the grey parrot.

"Five minutes later we came to a little town, rather pretty, with a long high street and one fair-sized hotel. We got down there, and the Colonel ordered lunch in a private room. Rummist thing was, he spoke with a Yankee accent that you could have cut with a butter knife. He asked in the office if any letter or message had come for Mr. Tatham of New York, and when there wasn't anything, he just grunted and hustled me into the private room. There, when he'd shut the door, he told me I was a clerk from a lawyer's office in London—Atcheson the name was—in Lincoln's Inn,



and he was Mr. James Tatham, another lawyer, only from New York, and he had crossed the Atlantic on important business to see Mr. John Beckford, who lived in the big house we'd just passed, and we would walk up there after lunch to get it over. I expect I was staring at him like a stuck pig, and positively bulging with silly questions, but he just told me that was all there was any use in my knowing, and tucked into his lunch.

"When we had finished he went off and had a talk with the waiter, and the landlady, and half a dozen men in the bar, asking the fooliest kind of questions about England and English customs—just as though he had never been nearer here than the Wild West Show—and we started out to pay our call. There was a short cut into the park, and we took a little boy along to show us the way, though the Colonel knew it all the time as well as he did. It was no end of a swell place. The house was about half a mile long, with a tower at one end, and the park had deer in it, and there were terraced gardens, and altogether you could see it must cost no end of money to keep it up.

"After we had paid off the boy and were among the trees, the Colonel told me that it was called Hamworthy Place, and used to belong to Lord Hamworthy, but had been sold about ten years ago to Mr. Beckford, an American, and now it belonged to his son. His mother had married again—some foreign swell with a name that sounded like Straphanger—and they all lived there together. Then the Colonel looked at me with those shiny eyes of his. 'I happen to know that the Count and Countess are away just now, but that young Mr. Beckford is at home. I think we shall probably see him, and if we do I want you to keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.'

"'But what in the world do we want to see him about?' I couldn't help asking.

"I thought at first the Colonel was going to bite me, but he didn't. 'Under his father's will,' he said, 'Mr. Beckford does not come into the capital of his fortune until his thirtieth birthday. That is on Friday next. I have come over from New York on business connected with the transference of the capital. You are the clerk of my London agents, who have been sent down with me. Does that satisfy you?'

"'But, Great Scot,' I said, 'supposing—'

"'You need suppose nothing,' said the Colonel, and we walked on again.

"The man who opened the door to us told us that the Count and Countess Straphanger—if that was the name—were away, and he didn't know when they would be back. Then he went and called another man who looked like an archbishop, but kinder, and the Colonel took him into his confidence. He pulled a card out, I mean—though where he got it from I don't know—and said he had come all the way from New York on purpose about Mr. Beckford's inheritance, and it was no end important that he should see him, and he'd been to his Town house, and been told that he was down here. The archbishop looked doubtful, and took us into a room, and said he would see what he could do for us. We'd been there about five minutes when another man came in, dressed more or less like a gentleman, an oily, greasy kind of person who was a great deal too sweet to be wholesome. He was some kind of a foreigner—a German I should have said from his accent, though he looked more like an Italian—and he told us that he was Mr. Beckford's private secretary. The Colonel told him what he had told the butler, and a lot more about its being vitally necessary to him to see Mr. Beckford personally, because there were certain things that had to be signed, and he would have to see him first, so that he could identify him, and that sort of thing. I could see that Grease Spot was a good deal worried over this, and he nearly fell over himself when he told us that Mr. Beckford was in bed seriously ill, and that he mustn't be disturbed on any account. The Colonel said there was no need to disturb him, that it would do if he could even see him for a moment without speaking to him, so that he could say he had seen him. Grease Spot hesitated and said at last he would ask the nurse.

"He was a good time asking her, and it was getting on for three-quarters of an hour before he came back again, bowing and scraping, and said he would take the responsibility on himself, only we must promise to be as still as mice, because the least excitement might have the worst possible effect. He told us the young man was suffering from pneumonia in its worst form, and he'd had an accident out hunting, and broken an arm and two ribs, and one of them had touched the lung, or something like that. So we followed him across a great hall and up a big marble staircase, and then through a great ballroom with pictures all along the sides of it, and then up another



staircase and into a small corridor in what, Grease Spot told us, was the most ancient part of the house. The Colonel seemed no end interested, and asked all kinds of questions about it, and especially about the old tower we had seen from the park, which Grease Spot told us was built in the fourteenth century and was part of the old castle. They had plenty of time to talk about things, because I should say we must have walked a good half-mile before we came to a room with a nurse in uniform standing outside it, with her finger to her lips. She was a grim-looking soul, more like a prison wardress than any of the nurses we used to have, but she was almost as friendly as Grease Spot, and told us in a whisper that the patient was asleep, and that we must be sure not to wake him. We tiptoed into the room, and there, in a big bed with curtains to it, a man was lying. He had one arm strapped across his chest, and a white bandage over his head which came down nearly to his eyes, and he was lying on his back with his chin up, so that you could scarcely see anything of his face. But I recognised him at once. It was Charlie Southgate. You see, what I recognised about him was what I don't suppose there were three other people in the world knew about, and that was a scar just under his chin. You know it, of course. He made it when we were at school together, getting through a barbed wire fence, and it is exactly in the shape of a triangle, and as he was lying the light just played on it, so that I couldn't possibly be mistaken.

"I was so startled that I as nearly as possible said something, only I remembered in time, and fortunately just then the poor old boy moaned in his sleep and moved one of his legs. The nurse hustled us out of the room again to where Grease Spot was waiting for us, and the Colonel said he was quite satisfied, and would be able to go back to London with a clear conscience, though he couldn't say how grieved he was to see the poor young man in such a state of health; and I am blest if tears didn't come into Grease Spot's eyes as he said how dreadful it was, but that he had the best of medical care, and they must hope it would all go right in the end. The Colonel said that he would hope to be seeing the Countess in London in a day or two, and we came away with no end of bowings and scrapings. Grease Spot was so pleased with us that he insisted on showing us another way out that he said was the old entrance to the castle—a little

twisty, narrow stone staircase that started just by Charlie's room and came out into the gardens through a little old doorway with walls six foot thick. The Colonel was so enchanted by it that he kept hanging back on the stairs to examine the stone carving and things, and it was all Grease Spot could do to get rid of him, and then we heard the clanging of bolts as the little door shut behind us, and we walked away through the gardens and across the park.

"You can imagine that I was just bubbling over with questions, but the Colonel didn't say anything until we had gone some little way, and were just passing a great oak tree that stood by itself opposite the tower end.

" 'Josephine and I spent the best part of an evening up there,' he said, smiling as if he was pleased with himself, as well he might be. And then, as I was too downy to say anything, he added: 'Of course you identified your friend.'

" 'I would swear to that chin anywhere,' I told him. 'But how in the world did you know that he was there? And how did he get there? And if he is there, and they are keeping him there, why in the world did they let us see him and——'

" 'They had drugged him first,' said the Colonel. He shook his head. 'Well, two can play at that game.'

" 'But——' I began.

" 'I have no time for questions. We have a great deal to do still if you want to get your friend back alive,' he said rather shortly. And, by George, there was.

"We cut away like lamplighters as soon as we were under the trees, and when we got back to the hotel, although he ordered the car at once, I am blest if he didn't spend a good half-hour gassing to the landlady in his sham Yankee accent about the joy it had been to him to see the young heir again whom he had known from his earliest childhood, and how sad it was to see him in such a state, and what a good thing to know he was so well looked after. In return she told him no end of gossip, but I only remember one bit of it—about how she thought he had been sickening for something long before he had his accident, because, while he used to be always up to his larks and ready to be hail-fellow-well-met with everyone, for something like six months it had been noticed in the neighbourhood that he had become gloomy and stand-offish and keeping out of everyone's way.



"When we got back into the car, the Colonel looked at his watch and gave a big start, and told the driver to drive like mad, or we should miss the four-thirty-two from Ipswich. We caught it all right, though only by the skin of our teeth, but to my surprise we got out again at the first stop,

which was Chelmsford, and walked about half a mile out of the town, and there, at a cross-roads, I am blest if there wasn't another car waiting for us with Ram Das—the Hindu who brought you up here—at the wheel. We started off into the country again, taking it pretty easy for about two hours, and stopping at a big town—Colchester it was—to get something to eat. Perhaps a couple of hours after that we stopped in a narrow country lane, all grown over with bushes, at the Back of Beyond—



"I visited Hamworthy with the old hurdy-gurdy."



the last place you'd have thought you could get a car into, especially after dark. I thought something was going to happen, but the Colonel only said: 'You'd better go to sleep, because we have got a lot to do still,' and told Ram Das to go out on patrol. He slept like a lamb, and I must have snoozed, too, for the next thing I knew I heard a church clock somewhere striking midnight, and Ram Das had come back and whispered something to the Colonel, and we got out and started on our ramble.

"Ram Das led the way through a couple of fields—I nearly broke my neck falling over a cow in one of them—and we came to a hedge with a park paling behind it, that had been broken away, so that it was quite easy to get through it, and ten minutes later we were standing under the very oak tree facing the tower in Hamworthy Place, and Ram Das was shinnyng up the trunk and feeling down inside it. Next thing he let down one of those portable folding stretchers, and we all moved off towards the tower without saying a word. We stopped by the little door, and Ram Das took off his shoes again and started climbing an angle of the wall just as a monkey might, helping himself by the ivy, I suppose, but without so much as a rustle. I take it the Colonel had unfastened one of the stair-windows when he lingered behind coming down, but, anyway, after a bit, the little door opened quite silently, and we were all going up the winding staircase, with the Ram leading. When we got to the top, there was a light shining under Charlie's door, and the Colonel pushed me back with his hand and crept up to the door and knocked in a stealthy sort of way, just as Grease Spot had in the afternoon. Evidently the nurse recognised it, for the next minute the door opened and I could see her shadow on the opposite wall. Before you could say 'Knife!' Ram Das had thrown some kind of a cloth over her head, and the Colonel was helping him hold her, for she was a big woman and fought hard. I smelt chloroform good and strong—you don't forget that smell if you have ever been in a field hospital—and in a minute or two she was quiet, and the Colonel drew me into the room. 'It is your turn now,' he whispered. 'Make Southgate understand we have come to take him away.'

"For a moment I wondered what would happen if it wasn't Charlie, after all, and we were run in as kidnappers; but it was him all right, although they had shaved his

moustache off and grown him funny little side-whiskers, as you see him now. He had heard the scuffling outside, and he was pretty scared, thinking they had come to kill him; but he knew me at once, and when I told him we had come to fetch him home, he just murmured something about 'Good old Poodle'—my nickname in the Army, you know—and went off into some kind of a faint. There isn't really any more to tell you. Everything went off without a hitch, and we got him to the stretcher and the car and back here, and he was in bed by three in the morning. And that's all I know about it."

"But I want to know a great deal more. I want to know how——"

Seymour held up his hand warningly. From the street without came the faint echo of childish cheering, while in the archway sounded a heavy rumbling of lorries. "The Colonel is back with his alligators," said Seymour. "You have only to ask him."

Actually it was not to Miss Uylett herself that Mr. Massarin explained his process of reasoning some half-hour later, but to Josephine. He was enjoying, with creditable appetite, a large beef-steak pudding which Ram Das had just set before him, what time Josephine, more delicately regaling herself with a banana, watched the movement of his lips with grave attention, chattering gently when he came to some point which seemed to her of special interest.

Clare and Seymour formed, as it were, his unofficial audience, listening at first from the open doorway of the little parlour, but by degrees making their way always more boldly inwards until they were sitting on two chairs by the doorway, without having received any rebuke from the master of the house.

"As soon as I saw this, Josephine, I realised that there was nothing in the problem which any intelligent monkey could not have reasoned out for herself. Now listen carefully." From his inner pocket he produced a shabby letter-case. "This, Josephine—don't scratch, or I shall turn you out of the room—this is from *The Daily Record* of July eleventh last. It is in the column devoted to provincial news, and it runs 'Tragic River Mystery. The body of an unknown man was yesterday discovered in the weir lock at Iklington, near Hamworthy. It had evidently been in the water some time, and the face was unrecognisable. It was clothed only in a grey flannel shirt and very ragged corduroy trousers. On the



left shoulder was the old scar of a bullet wound. It is supposed that the unfortunate man was an ex-soldier on tramp who fell into the river in the darkness. The inquest will be held by the Ipswich coroner on Thursday.' Does that suggest anything to you, Josephine?" Josephine, who was regarding the empty skin of a banana with pensive regret, made no reply.

"It was obvious from the very beginning," went on Mr. Massarin, "that Mr. Southgate was wanted to take the place or otherwise act as the double of some other person. The whole trend of the questions asked our friend Seymour could mean nothing else. At the same time Count Straphanyi could not very well himself advertise for anything of the sort. His only chance was to answer advertisements, and I dare say he had answered a hundred before he got what he wanted. The point about the height and the old wound—have I your attention, Josephine?—would make that clear to any reasoning ape. It remained to consider why the double was needed. We all know that kings sometimes find it convenient to employ men more or less like them, and dressed in their uniform, on public occasions when there are revolutionists about. But there are very few kings left nowadays, and not one of them that I can call to mind with the scar of a bullet wound in his shoulder. Now, the only clues we had were first that the people who answered Seymour's advertisement were obviously well off; secondly, that the man was a foreigner, and the woman, though less certainly, American; and, thirdly, that Southgate was to sail some kind of a racing boat—vaguely described as a five-ton ketch—somewhere on the west or the south-west coast on the fifteenth of August last. By the help of *The Daily Record* I found out that there were only three regattas that day at places reached from Paddington. Two of them were the ordinary seaside visitors' affairs, with greasy-pole climbing and that sort of amusement. The third was the Mid-Wales Sailing Regatta held at Porthavon—quite a big affair, with international entries and a number of big yachts sent on from Cowes. It did not take me long to get hold of the local paper with lists of the bigwigs and the winning boats and so on. There was a race for five-ton ketches, the second home being Mr. John Beckford's *Minnehaha*. Now, if you read your *Record*, Josephine, as carefully as I do, you would know all that it is necessary to know about Mr. John Beckford.

He is the son of an American copper king, one of the first who set the fashion of settling in England after he had made his pile. He bought Hamworthy Place, and died there some fifteen years ago, leaving rather a curious will. You will find it all set out in the tenth volume of *The Daily Record*, under the date of January seventeenth. By it he left all his money, some thirty or forty million dollars, in trust for his son, who was then about fifteen, with the proviso that he should not come into the capital until his thirtieth birthday, which—mark this, Josephine—takes place on Friday next. If he died beforehand, the whole fortune was to go to the Beckford Research Institute in New York, which the old man had founded and which was his hobby. Old Beckford did not, as is shown by his will, have very much confidence in his wife. When he was still a prospector, he married the daughter of a Polish immigrant, and presumably, when riches came to them, happiness left them. Let that be a lesson to you, Josephine. Whatever the reason, her husband, instead of a lump sum, left her only ten thousand dollars a year for life, at the same time leaving her to the care of his son, to make what settlements he should think desirable on entering into his fortune.

"As you know, Josephine, I have rather a curious memory, and I happened particularly to remember Hamworthy Place, because in the old days it was famous for having one of the only four remaining herds of the real old wild white British cattle in existence. Lord Hamworthy sold them, and I bought three of the bulls, which I afterwards sold to Hagenbecks. The coincidence of the elderly wealthy American woman with the foreign husband who wished Captain Southgate to take part in a regatta in which young Mr. Beckford was also a competitor, and that of the tramp with the scar on his shoulder found dead in a neighbouring river, appealed to me. Young Beckford, I found out from *The Daily Record*, was of an adventurous nature, like many of these young Americans. Supposing anything should have happened to him—that he was accidentally drowned, for instance, before reaching his thirtieth birthday—his mother and her foreign husband—for two years after Mr. Beckford's death she married one of her own countrymen, a Count Straphanyi, with rather an evil reputation—it would go fairly hard with them. That of course is what must have happened. I learned in the village that he was always fooling about in



some sort of sailing-canoe of his own invention. No doubt he took one risk too many—and his birthday still six months off. Does it not suggest itself to you, Josephine, as a reasoning ape, that in that case an unscrupulous person, such as you may consider Count Straphanyi, would find it very much to his interest to conceal young Mr. Beckford's death until at least his thirtieth birthday was passed, so that he could be said to have left behind him some sort of will leaving everything to his mother, which he would then be perfectly able to do, and afterwards to get rid of him with as little delay as possible? That is exactly what he did—got rid of the body by dressing it in a tramp's clothes. It would have been too risky to bury it, so he dropped it into the river again, and then looked round for a successor.

"Well, Josephine, as you know, you and I visited Hamworthy with the old hurdy-gurdy. We didn't do badly out of it, did we, Josephine? I collected sixteen shillings in coppers in my character of an Afghan War veteran, which will serve to buy you a new jacket, although you did bite the railway porter. Also I collected some very interesting information from the gate-keeper at one of the park lodges, who was an old soldier of the hundred and thirtieth, and served in India at the same time as myself. From him I learned very much what I heard afterwards from the landlady of 'The Hamworthy Arms' about the change which had come over young Beckford in the last six months, which, according to the old soldier, was brought about by an accident that revived the shell-shock he had after the War, for it seems he joined the British Flying Corps then, and was brought down with a bullet through his left shoulder and very nearly killed in a dog-fight over Ypres.

"I found out, too, that the Count and Countess were not at Hamworthy, and a couple of hours in that convenient tree we know of showed me that young Mr. Beckford, or whoever was passing for him, was there and seriously ill.

"Although I hadn't many doubts myself, it was necessary to have someone positively to identify young Southgate, lest we should

kidnap the wrong man altogether. So I took a fairly long chance and arranged that Seymour should go down with me to identify him. I reasoned that the Count and Countess would not have left home without leaving some confidential man in charge—the Count's brother, as I believe him to be—and that he would accordingly know enough about things to realise that the very way to arouse suspicion would be to refuse me admission to the young man's room. As we know, Josephine, he took his precautions beforehand, and had it not been for the scar under Southgate's chin—well, we should have been taking a longer chance than might have been altogether desirable. As it was, I should very much like to be there, Josephine, when the real lawyers from New York wish to see young Mr. Beckford in order to hand him over his fortune."

"Do you think they meant to kill Charlie?" said Seymour suddenly.

"I haven't a doubt of it," said Mr. Massarin, pausing as he was about to absorb a pleasant spoonful of rich gravy. "It was the only sensible thing for a man in Count Straphanyi's position to do. Otherwise, as he would look at it, he would be laying himself open to blackmail for the rest of his life. Beckford's birthday was the day after to-morrow. On Sunday Captain Southgate would have died peacefully and have been buried in Hamworthy churchyard amidst the prayers of the weeping tenantry. After all, Mr. Tatham of New York could easily have been taken down on Friday to pay another call."

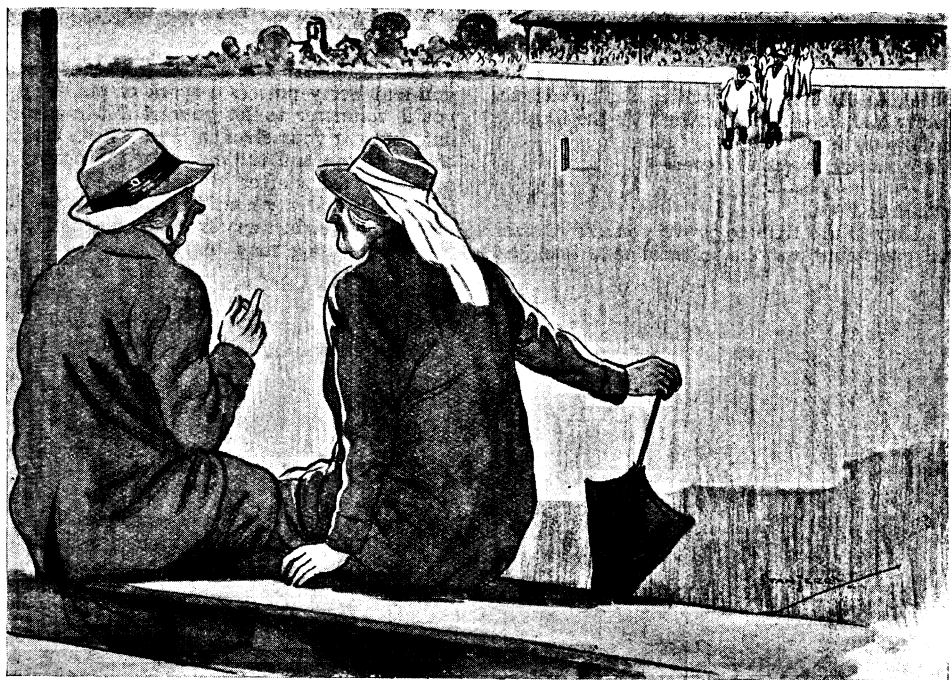
"But what are you going to do about it?" asked Clare fiercely. "Are you going to let these—these murderers go scot free?"

"I am not a policeman," said Mr. Massarin severely, "and in this case the crime has failed. What do you think about it, Josephine?"

Josephine carefully tucked an unfinished banana into the bosom of her jacket and, settling herself upon Mr. Massarin's shoulder, slipped an arm round his neck and, extending two enormously long lips, kissed him fondly on the left cheek. Thereafter she composed herself to sleep.







IMPARTING INFORMATION.

LADY (first time at cricket match, pointing to wickets): What are those sticks there?  
FRIEND: I think those are what they call the cricket fixtures.

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### INTO THE BREACH.

*By E. L. Roberts.*

For some days I had been throwing out tentative hints that a proper wifely regard for my well-being would result in a voluntary suggestion that I should undergo a week's golf. Unfortunately there are times when Betty can be as dense as a London fog.

Consequently, as I made a belated appearance at breakfast and crept towards the groaning board, I was planning a new offensive, but was counter-attacked three seconds before "zero."

"What do you know about chickens?" asked Betty, looking up from the letter she was reading.

"I ought really to have notice of that question," I told her, "but if you insist—Let me see, Vol. Three, I fancy, of 'Who's Zoo.' Yes, here we are: 'Chickens—bipedal biplanes; brain development, nil; appetite, abnormal; recreations, egg-laying, moulting, and being broody. In extreme senility the legs of ex-chickens form the backbone of railway refreshment room luncheon baskets. To prevent injury to men working on the line, the bones should be placed on the rack, and not thrown out of the win—'"

"Fool!" broke in Betty. "Pass me an egg,

then you can have your letter. It's from Peter," she continued, as I assisted one of the degraded objects masquerading as eggs on to her plate. "I've had one from Delia."

"Such synchronisation fills me with foreboding," I confessed, "but I am not surprised. According to our private augur, the portents are quite unpropitious. For instance, the fowl sacrificed three nights ago on the altar of friendship, in honour of the Browns, is alive this morning—very much alive, I gather, almost migratory, in fact!"

"If you want to make me ill," said Betty, reaching, if I may say so, for the salt, "you are on the right lines."

"As O.C. commissariat," I pointed out, "it is surely your right to know that I have given instructions for the creature and its entourage, if I may so term it, to be put under restraint in the dustbin. But to descend from the sublime to the ridiculous, did Delia send me her fond love?"

Betty regarded me with cold contempt. "Everybody isn't as blind as your wife," she retorted rather crushingly.

"Blind to my virtues, you mean," I riposted brightly. "But no matter. What has her misguided husband to say?"



I tore open the envelope and extracted the contents. As I expected, there was no cheque, merely a sheet of paper marred by the illegible scribble of the unfortunate Peter.

The scrawl was as follows:—

“DEAR FOOL,  
Now is the time to prove yourself a man.  
Our great-aunt on the infernal side has just

presented us with twenty-one (all twins), and if you and Betty possess a spark of public spirit, you'll volunteer to let your rabbit-hutch of a flat, and dig yourselves in here. Both the wife of my bosom and the owner of the bosom are nervous wrecks after the anxiety of the last few weeks, and my medical man tells me that unless I get right away from everything, something distressing may happen.

“The fact that you imagine you can't decompose your drivell out of London does not deter me. In fact, if I can dam the turgid flood even for a month, I shall probably be threatened with the O.B.E.

“Knowing you as I unfortunately do, I am buying our tickets this morning. Even you can't let a pillar of the Empire (me!) be caught bending, as it were.

“Hoping this finds you seeing red, as it leaves me in the pink—very pale pink, of course.

“Yours,

“PETER.

“P.S.—If trade is brisk, send me a wire.”

“The hound!” I commented, as I passed the precious epistle to Betty.

So far from resenting the outrage, her reading of it was punctuated by gurgles.

“That's right,” I said, “revel in the insults hurled at your breadwinner!”

“Isn't he a scream?” she chuckled.

“He is,” I agreed, “and several other things. The point is, do we fall in with his foul suggestion, or don't we?”

“It would be rather jolly,” murmured Betty. “I love teeny-weeny chickens when they are teeny-weeny. They're dears!”

“Are they?” I queried. “Then, as you've evidently made up our minds to go, let it be clearly understood that I will *not* warm up their Glaxo, or whatever it is they have, nor will I run round sticking ‘dummies’ into their bills.



A GOOD PLAN.

SHE (after spending the evening with neighbours): I think the Smythes are an ideal couple—they think alike about everything.

HE: Yes, but I notice *she* usually thinks *first*.

suggested that we should spend a month at Newquay. I mean to say, she has invited herself here for a month, and at this very moment Delia is describing (on a postcard) our chagrin at being unable to entertain the project put forward in her letter of the umpteenth ult., owing to our being away! The point is, what about our chickens? The incubator has just



Moreover, I shall forthwith proceed upon a week's golf by way of preparation for the ordeal."

I helped myself to the reserve egg and glared defiance.

"All right, dear," said Betty meekly. "I was just going to suggest that you should, because Delia wants me to go at once to help her to shop."

"As it is Peter's money, urge her to do herself really well," I recommended grimly. "Don't let her spoil the frock for a haporth of georgette!"

With which injunction I proceeded to the composition of the following informative telegram to Peter:

"Leave key of wine-cellar.—BILL."

### THE RECITATION AID.

The practice of reciting verse aloud as one walks is recommended as an aid to the cultivation of a graceful and rhythmical carriage.

I am learning some nice recitations, but don't be alarmed, I entreat;

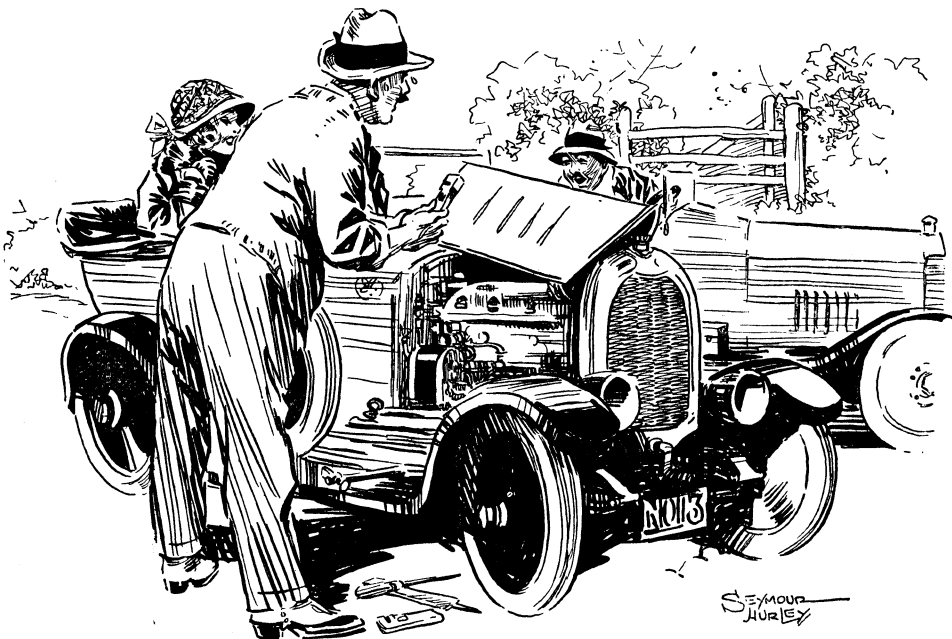
They're not for performing at concerts, but only for use in the street.

For if when you walk in the city long poems aloud you should prate,

You'll develop a rhythmical carriage and add a new charm to your gait.

Have you got a bad hunch in your shoulders, or does your head droop from your neck?

Then recite all those verses affecting of the boy who was glued to the deck.



### TO EASE THE SITUATION

GOOD SAMARITAN: Hullo! Need any assistance?

MOTORIST: Yes—just answer my wife's questions while I am underneath, will you?

An elderly man who knew something of law lived in an Irish village where no solicitor practised. He was in the habit of arranging the disputes of his neighbours and making their wills for them.

At an early hour one morning he was aroused from his slumbers by a loud knocking at his door, and, putting his head out of the window, he asked who was there.

"It's me, Patsy Flaherty. 'Tis meself couldn't get a wink of sleep, thinking of the will I have made!"

"What's the matter with the will?" asked the amateur lawyer.

"Matter, indeed!" replied Pat. "Sure, I've not left meself so much as a three-legged stool to sit down upon!"

Or if you're afflicted with bunions, and wobble about like a barge,

You'll learn to walk straight while declaiming the tale of the Light Brigade's charge.

Your waist-line, perchance, is increasing, then what you must do to get slim

Is to take a deep breath and relate all the story of poor "Little Jim."

This is bound to attract some attention, but don't be perturbed about that;

Any crowd which collects will soon vanish if you offer to pass round your hat.

R. H. Roberts.



"Does the cinema depict real life?" asks a critic. The answer is that it depends on the spelling. It certainly depicts *reel* life.



## THE IDEAL LAWN.

How is it that, after all the time which has elapsed since the first lawn was laid, we are still condemned to perpetual hand labour with the mower?

In spite of our boasted progress in science and invention, nothing has yet been done in the way of producing dwarf grass seed, which would only grow about an eighth of an inch and require no cutting.

One genius did hit on the idea of setting the seed a foot deep, so that only the tips of the blades of grass would appear through the ground, but his friends had him removed to an asylum.

If the Japanese can prevent an oak tree

## CHEERFUL FOOD.

"Our milk comes from contented cows," says a dairyman's advertisement. This strikes a new note in food publicity, which may shortly develop into a chorus. Then we shall hear that "Our stimulating eggs are laid by hilarious hens," and "Our cod liver oil is extracted from only the friskiest fishes."

Also the butcher in the near future may let himself go in this style: "Prime cuts of beef selected from amiable oxen." "Special today: Merry mutton outlets from sheep with a sense of humour." "Only placid-minded pigs provide the pork for our sausages." This idea will bring consolation to all but vegetarians.



## OUT OF CHARACTER.

SHE: I'm sorry, Clarence, but I can only be a sister to you.

HE: Then give me back my presents.

SHE: Why, Clarence, whoever heard of a sister being so silly?

growing more than a few inches high, it ought to be comparatively easy to keep grass within reasonable bounds.

Failing this, an automatic self-acting mower, which could be trusted to cut the lawn and trim the edges without human intervention, might meet the needs of the suburban gardener.



A MACHINE has been invented into which a man can sing and be heard by nobody except himself. If some artistes we know were to adopt this device, concerts would lose half their terrors.

THERE was a load of bricks on the edge of the football ground in readiness for some reconstruction work.

A very keen supporter of the team came up. He gazed at the bricks for a few moments, knit his brows as if in deep thought, and then turned to the club secretary, who was standing near.

"Why didn't you get 'arf bricks?" he demanded. "They would 'ave been much 'andier."

"Handier?" said the secretary. "Why, we couldn't rebuild the pavilion with half bricks!"

"Oh, a pavilion!" sighed the supporter. "I thought they were for the referee!"



## INTELLIGENCE.

*By Humphrey Purcell.*

THE whole world is familiar with the means by which the British Public Service now recruits its clerks. We have all seen the tongue-twisting, brain-waving, and hair-raising problems that were recently used to determine who was and who was not fit to count the stamps on the cook's insurance card, to authorise repayment of our National Savings Certificates, and to draft solemn replies to the facetious questions of our Members of Parliament.

This was the kind of thing, you will recollect :

"If A appears in the last word but one before the word last beginning with B in this sentence, write B where you would first write A in copying out the aforesaid word backwards. If A does not appear, but B does, write tarra-diddle three times upside down, and try the next question. If neither A nor B appears, something has gone wrong, and you should try again."

And this :

"The first shot was fired ten minutes after Y cut his chin with his safety razor. Had Z been out all night, he would have returned home an hour before the milkman left Y's milk can outside X's flat. The milkman was three-quarters of an hour late, but he usually greeted Z as the Town Hall clock struck seven. He saw a spot of blood on Y's doorstep. Who killed X, and why? If you don't know, state the cube root of 359'."

That was some months ago. Nearly all the entrants have recovered. The examiners have probably got ready another batch of conundrums for the next torture-session. And the successful candidates have now been appointed.

Do we as a nation appreciate what this signifies? I doubt it. The full effects of this method of gauging intelligence will not be felt yet awhile, but some day the man who knew who killed X, and could say what is to be as mermaids are to codfish, will be the man who decides how much postage we have to put on a three-halfpenny letter, and why we should pay twice as much income tax as we dodged last year.

We really ought to be prepared for what will happen, and the following examples are therefore suggested of what we may expect in, say, 1940, if nothing is done about it :

"In completing this census return, enter your second Christian name third in the first space,

your surname first, and your first name between your surname and your second name, other names being entered in due order after the third name."

"The postage on a letter of three ounces is twopence; for each additional ounce deduct the postage appropriate to two ounces at fourpence per pound, and add one halfpenny plus an amount proportionate to eightpence per pound. If the result is less than twopence, it is wrong, but a letter may in certain circumstances



SEEING'S BELIEVING.

TOMMIE: Mummie, I've had my bath.

VOICE FROM BELOW (suspiciously): Are you quite sure?

TOMMY (eagerly): Yes. You come up and have a look at the water!

be sent for three-halfpence (for particulars see page 639)."

To ascertain your assessable income, first deduct from your actual income, if earned, the sum of £150 and then 10 per cent., and if unearned £150 less 10 per cent., and proceed in accordance with the simple instructions on pages 121-256 of the enclosed handbook. If, however, your income exceeds £500, you may



alternatively enter the full gross amount in the left-hand bottom corner of a cheque, and, after completing same, enclose in the buff envelope, sealing the flap, and deposit in any pillar box."

"In replying to this letter address as indicated in the top right-hand corner, quoting in your top right-hand corner below your address the number appearing in the top left-hand corner, and in your top left-hand corner the number you wish to be quoted in the top right-hand corner below the address of any reply to your reply."



#### QUITE ANOTHER MATTER.

DOCTOR: Isn't this accident very similar to one he had some time ago?

PATIENT'S WIFE: No, doctor. Last time 'e slipped on a banana skin, but this time it was a piece of asparagus.

A NEW microphone has been invented which makes audible the sounds made by the tiniest insects. Listening-in to an ants' nest should now become a popular pastime.

"DOMESTIC happiness depends very largely on cupboard accommodation," says a daily paper.

How true this is! Friction is bound to arise sooner or later in a household where the coals, marmalade, Spanish onions, eggs and bacon, father's mackintosh and the family skeleton all reside in the same cupboard.

MUGGINS considered himself a very smart fellow—distinctly witty, in fact—and he never lost an opportunity of using what he called his "gift."

One day he was strolling down the High Street, when he saw a notice in a shop window which ran: "If you don't see what you want in the window, come inside."

"I don't see what I want in the window," he said.

"Well, then, ask for it," said the shopkeeper.

"Well," went on the wit, "I have found so many smart men in this town that I am in search of a first-class idiot."

Without hesitation the proprietor turned to his assistant with the order—

"James, bring a large sheet of brown paper and some string, and make this gentleman up into a neat parcel."



AMONG the instructions which a woman had given her new maid from the country was one to bring in a glass of milk each evening at seven o'clock. The first evening Jane brought in the glass clasped tightly in her hand.

"Don't do that again—it's bad etiquette, Jane," ordered the mistress. "Always bring it in on a tray."

Next evening Jane appeared again, a puzzled look on her face and a tray full of milk in her hand.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said the maid, "do you want a spoon, or will you lap it up?"



A SCOTCHMAN and a Welshman were arguing as to the merits of their respective countries.

"Ah, weel," said the former, "they tore down an auld castle in Scotland not long ago and found many wires under it, which shows that the telegraph was known there hundreds of years ago."

"Ah, ah," said the Welshman, "they tore down an old castle in Wales quite recently, and, mind you, there were no wires found under it, which shows that they knew all about wireless telegraphy in Wales hundreds of years ago."



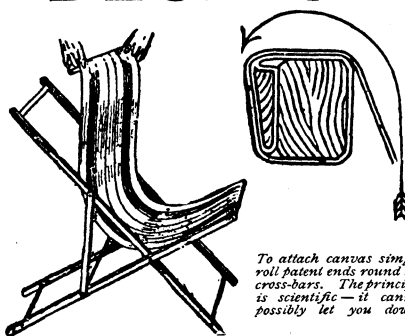
CAPTAIN OF YOUTHFUL CRICKET TEAM (to new resident): Will you join our cricket club, sir?

NEW RESIDENT: Well, really, I'm afraid I know absolutely nothing about the game. I couldn't do anything except umpire.



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THE mild-looking man walked into the smoking-room at the hotel and forgot to close the door behind him.

"Shut that door!" yelled the rough-looking stranger in the armchair. "Don't you know how to behave? Where were you brought up? In a barn?"

The mild little man complied, but on looking up a moment later the rough man noticed that he was in tears. Going over to his victim, he apologised.

"Oh, come," he said soothingly, "you shouldn't take it to heart because I asked if you were brought up in a barn."

"That's it, that's it!" sobbed the little man. "I was brought up in a barn, and it makes me homesick every time I hear an ass bray!"

WILKINS presented a most peculiar spectacle. He was really quite a thin, small man, but on this particular morning he looked bulky, to say the least of it.

The neighbours were surprised.

Jenkins, on his way to the station, paused in astonishment as he saw Wilkins emerge from his house.

"Hello!" he said. "You look well wrapped up. Where are you going? To the North Pole?"

"No," was the reply. "I'm going to paint the front door."

"But why are you wearing all those coats?"

"Because it says on the paint tin," retorted Wilkins, "'To obtain the best results, put on three or four coats.'"



TO MEET THE CASE.

SISTER: You'd better not wash your face too clean, 'Arold. Remember you've got a black eye.

THINGS I'VE NEVER SEEN.

I've never seen, in all my days,  
A smile where beauty lies,  
Deserving such unstinted praise  
As that in Molly's eyes.  
I've never seen so dear a face,  
A heart so truly kind,  
But own it's somewhat hard to trace  
Much logic in her mind.

Ah, logic is a vain pretence,  
More boasted of than shown,  
And when it comes to common-sense,  
My Molly holds her own.  
Yet, spite of what this fact may mean,  
My neighbours all agree  
That *nobody* has ever seen  
What she could see in me.

John Lea.

"I HAVE seen nothing quite like your winter," remarked an American visitor to a reporter recently. That shows he has never been here in the summer.

SOME explorers have discovered in Brazil a bird that barks like a dog. When our dog hears of this, he will want to take singing lessons.

IN Wales a *café* waitress has been discovered who has a perfect knowledge of Greek. She must find this very useful for expressing her feelings when an impatient customer ventures to ring the bell.



# THE WINDSOR

AUG 7 1924 AUGUST

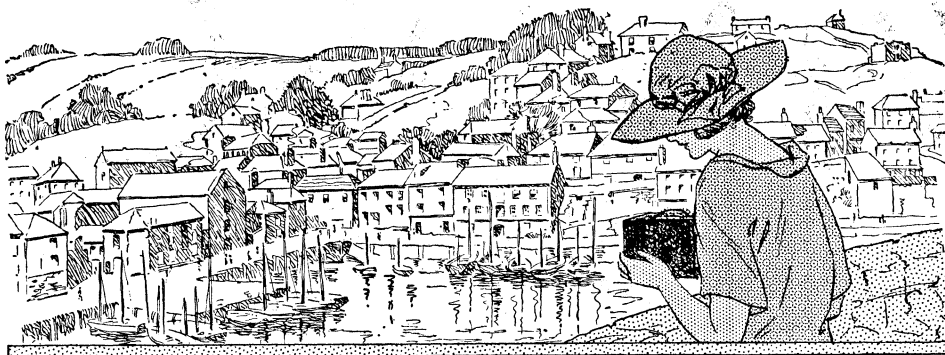
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1. The Competition is restricted to those who have received Hawk-Eye Cameras from the proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap.
2. Contact prints only are eligible. Prints may be mounted or unmounted, but the outside size of any mount must not exceed 8 in. by 6 in.
3. Competitors may send in as many entries as they like, but the subject and the full name and address of each competitor must be written on the back of each picture.
4. Every picture entered must have been taken on Kodak  $3\frac{1}{4}$  by  $2\frac{1}{4}$  Film Pack by the competitor, though he or she need not have done the developing, printing, or mounting.
5. Entries must be addressed to Photo Competition, Wright's Coal Tar Soap, 48, Southwark Street, London, S.E. 1, and must arrive not later than August 30th, 1924. The result will be advertised in the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Chronicle* on Sept. 30th.
6. The proprietors of Wright's Coal Tar Soap reserve to themselves the right of purchasing the copy right of any of the photographs sent for £2 2s. each.
7. Kodak Limited will act as judges to the Competition, and their decision must be accepted as final.
8. Competitors may choose any of the following subjects, and the prizes will be awarded to the pictures that best illustrate the spirit of the title; photographic excellence or technical quality will not count—it is the picture that will win the prize.

### SUBJECTS.

Children at Play. Pets.  
A Day with a Hawk-Eye.  
Sports and Pastimes.  
Boy Scouts or Girl Guides.  
Outdoors in Spring.  
Nature Study.









AT THE FOOT OF THE DOWNS. BY JOHN FULLWOOD.

*Reproduced by permission of the Autotype Fine Art Company, New Oxford Street, W.C., owners of the copyright and publishers of the large plate.*



"Miss Voile, however, was not smiling, while Rage was regarding the jovial landscape with a perfectly poisonous stare."



# WITHOUT PREJUDICE

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "And Five Were Foolish," "Valerie French," "Berry and Co.,"  
"Jonah and Co.," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"YOU know," said Cicely Voile,  
"you're a great relief."  
Her companion opened one eye.  
"Why?"

"Because you don't make love."

Captain Toby Rage folded his hands upon his stomach and regarded the blue heaven. This the April sun had to himself and, making the most of his monarchy, set the whole firmament ablaze.

A mile away the Atlantic simmered contentedly—a rolling, laughing steppe of blue and silver; the lazy murmur of its surf gladdened the ear. To the left the mountain-sides smacked in the heat, the comfortable haze blurring their grandeur to beauty. To the right the coast of France danced all the way to Biarritz, her gay

green frock flecked with the dazzling white of villas, edged by the yellow road that sweeps to Spain. Behind, the countryside, a very Canaan, basked in the earnest of summer, peaceful and big with promise of abundance to come.

From the moor where the two were sitting all these things could be enjoyed. It was, indeed, a superb withdrawing-room, for, while an occasional snarl told of a car flying on the broad highway, no one essayed the by-road which led to the yellow broom.

"The art of life," said Toby, "is to be fancy-free."

Cicely Voile clapped her sweet-smelling hands.

"We're going to get on—you and I," she cried excitedly. "I can see that."

*Copyright, 1924, by Dornford Yates, in the United States of America.*



"Why?"—suspiciously.

"Because our outlook's the same. Think of the friendships that have been wrecked by love."

Captain Rage groaned.

"Don't," he said. "It's too awful. But I'm thankful you see my point. Conceive some cheerful little playground—Honolulu, for instance—peopled by an equal number of youths and maidens, all reasonably attractive and all proof against affection."

"I can't," said Cicely Voile. "It's too—too dazzling. Never mind. Go on."

"Well, what a time they'd all have. No jealousies, no heart-burnings, no schemings, no inconvenience. . . ."

"I can see," said Cicely, "that you have been through the hoop."

"Haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, isn't it a curse?" said Rage heartily. "When I look back and think of what I suffered, I go all gooseflesh. Turning out when I wanted to stay at home, staying up when I wanted to go to bed, going to plays I didn't want to see, sloshing money about, writin' letters, travellin'. . . I tell you, Love's a mug's game. It's—it's buying trouble at a top price. That's the wicked part. If you must buy trouble, you may as well get it cheap. But Love's a disease. One becomes temporarily insane. I'd a very nice Rolls then, and I actually let her drive it." He sighed memorially. "It was never the same car again."

"That," said Cicely, "was probably imagination. Still, I know what you mean. The misery I went through, trying to be in time! Alfred couldn't bear being late."

"Exactly," said Rage. "Yet I'll bet he used to wait by the hour, poor devil. I know. I've had some. I tell you, Love's a disease."

He sighed comfortably, settling his head upon its pillow of broom.

Cicely regarded him, speechless with indignation.

At length—

"I was endeavouring to point out," she said coldly, "that I was the sufferer. Being fool enough to worship Alfred, I used to wear myself out—humouring his whim." She paused dramatically. "Then, again, I used to leave parties early. He used to say one should be asleep by two. Time and again I've left a dance in the middle so that Alfred could go to bed."

"I think," murmured Captain Rage, "that I should have liked Alfred."

"I quite expect," flashed Cicely, "that I should have got on with—what was her name?"

"Rachel," said Toby. "And I'm quite sure you would. In fact, I think you'd probably 've been fast friends. The silly part of it is that so might she and I. I did get on with her—extremely well, until I fell to Love." He sat up there and set his hands on his knees. "Still, I'm not ungrateful. One attack like that does you a lot of good. But for the doing I've had, you'd almost certainly 've knocked me out."

"Do look out," cried Cicely.

"It's all right," said Rage. "Don't you worry. I'm not within miles of making love. But I've watched you for months, I have; and there's something very charming about you. Besides, you're quite beautiful."

"As beautiful as Rachel?"

"Oh, much more. Look at your throat, for instance. Oh, you can't, can you? Never mind. What—"

"Oh, but I do mind," said Cicely, wriggling. "This is a perfect experience. For anyone to tell me I'm beautiful, except as a prelude to familiarity, is something I've never known."

"Surely Alfred—"

"Oh, I always had to kiss him, or something. Not that I minded particularly. I rather liked kissing Alfred. But a compliment without any sort or kind of corollary is really delicious." She whipped off her hat and put her chin in the air. "Don't you love me like that?"

"Oh, gorgeous!" said Toby. "Now, Rachel's stockings weren't silk all the way."

Hastily Miss Voile adjusted her frock.

"I was referring," she said stiffly, "to my profile."

"Equally lovely," said Rage. Cicely choked. "I think I like your mouth best of all. I can quite understand people wanting to kiss you, you know. That short upper lip brings it, as it were, into the alert position. It sort of says, 'Kiss me, you fool. Go on. I shan't bite you.'"

"I shall in a minute," said Cicely, bubbling. "How about my nose?"

"Oh, that's well out of the way."

"I suppose you mean it turns up."

"The best ones do," said Toby. "Besides, you needn't worry. From temples to chin, you've got a face in a million. And then you are so sweet."



"Now, do be careful," said Cicely. "Don't spoil it."

Rage waved her away.

"Try to remember, my lady, that I do not care. I see that you're awfully attractive, but you don't attract me. No woman does. I tell you, I'm case-hardened."

"I will try," said Cicely humbly. "But you must forgive me if I forget now and then. Of course I'm the same myself. Men mean no more to me than so many blocks of wood. I certainly find them convenient. I tell you frankly I find you very convenient. But that's as far as it goes."

"Well, isn't that nice?" said Toby. "Isn't it an agreeable reflection that you and I can consort together, take pleasure in each other's company, and remain heart-whole? I'm not much to look at, so—"

"I think," said Cicely Voile, "you're very good-looking."

"I'm not really," said Rage, "but I suppose you feel it's up to you to say something. Any way, we'll pretend you think so. I'm good-looking, and you—well, you're just exquisite. I can admire you and say so—'without prejudice.' You can glory in my homely features—dote, for instance, upon my ears and tell me how much they move you—without being misunderstood. Think of the things we can discuss, the interests we can share, the easy intimacy we can enjoy—all 'without prejudice.' Look at the terms we can use."

"Terms?"

"Terms. Why shouldn't I call you 'darling'? I like the word, and it suits you uncommonly well. Coming from me, it's not an expression of love."

"I think you'd better begin with 'Cicely.'"

"I don't care what you think," said Captain Rage. "That's the beauty of it. If you were to say you'd never speak to me again, I shouldn't care a curse. Still, I'll temper the wind—Cicely. Besides, it's a sweet pretty name. Suits you down to the ground."

Miss Voile put a hand to her head.

"It's terribly difficult to get hold of," she said. "You're quite sure I don't attract you?"

"Absolutely," said Rage. "If you were to go up in smoke—now, I shouldn't turn a hair. I like you as I like a work of art. If you were damaged or removed, I should deplore your removal: but I shouldn't come unbuttoned about it. But surely, if you feel the same, you can appreciate—"

"I do," said Miss Voile quickly. "But then I'm a girl. Men don't attract women: they sort of bear them down."

"Ugh, the brutes!" said Rage.

"But women are always supposed to attract a man. Of course I know you're impervious, but when you speak and look so—so naturally, it's almost impossible to believe that there's nothing doing."

"You'll soon get used to that," said her companion. "When you've called me 'Toby darling' a few dozen times without a sign of a rise—"

"D'you think you could stand it, Toby? I mean, Alfred used to say my voice—"

"My sweet," said Toby, "I could listen to your voice all day . . . listen . . . It has quality."

With that he lay back on the turf and closed his eyes.

Cicely set her teeth.

Then—

"Toby dear," she purred, "I left my coat in the car."

"That's right," said her squire. "I saw you. Hangin' over the door."

"If I had it, Toby, I could make it into a pillow and go to sleep—too."

"So you could," said Toby.

There was a silence.

"But—but it's in the car, Toby dear."

"I know," murmured Rage. "Hangin' over the door." He sighed. "If you do go and get it, you might bring me back my pouch. But don't go on purpose."

There was another silence.

"Are you sure," ventured Miss Voile, "that you aren't confusing ordinary politeness with love?"

"Positive," said Toby. "You're proving me, you are. Shove your little face down on the broom, sweetheart, and I'll tell you a fairy-tale."

A silence, succeeded by a rustling, suggested that Cicely had capitulated.

"Go on," she said presently.

"There was once," said Toby, "a King: and he had a daughter who was as lovely as the dawn. That's why they called her Sunset. She attracted like anything—especially the Master of the Horse. Well, one day, just as the King was about to sack the Master of the Horse for being attracted, a voice said 'You'd better not.'"

"Who's that?" said the King, looking all round the room.

"I rather think," said the Master of the Horse, "that it's my uncle. He said that



if ever I was in trouble I was to rub this ring, and I've just rubbed it.'

"Oh, did he?" said the King. 'I mean, have you? Then it was a piece of great presumption. And now push off.'

"Very good, sir," said the Master of the Horse. 'Good-bye.'

"Good-bye," said the King.

"Good luck," said the voice.

"You shut your face," said the King. 'What's all that shouting about?'

"Nobody answered him this time, but he had not long to wait. In fact, the door had hardly closed behind the Master of the Horse when it was burst open by the Lord Chamberlain.

"Sunset's gone into a trance," he announced. 'You know. A sort of swoon, only worse.'

"Curse these enchanters," said the King, catching up his crown. 'Where is she?'

"In the forecourt," said the Lord Chamberlain. 'She was playing with the State bloodhound when all of a sudden she collapsed. She's still got the dog by the ear.'

"This was true. What was more to the point was that the physicians advised that, since she was under a spell, any attempt to interfere with her grip would probably prove fatal.

"The position was really extremely awkward.

"With incredible difficulty Sunset was got to bed, while the dog, who was becoming every moment more suspicious and impatient of his detention, was persuaded to lie upon a divan by her side.

"Then a council was held.

"Violence to the bloodhound seemed futile, and mutilation as bad. If Sunset was destined for an indefinite period to grasp a piece of flesh, it seemed best that it should be alive. The dog, however, would require exercise—an obviously delicate business, since the sleeping princess must accompany it upon its rambles.

"The dog," said the King, 'must be duly tended and controlled. Who's to do it?'

"Nothing doing," said the Lord Chamberlain. 'I'd rather resign. The brute jolly near had me when we were going upstairs.'

"He never did like me," said the Comptroller hurriedly. 'Always growls when I pass.'

"That's nothing to go by," said the King. 'Heaps of dogs——'

"It's good enough for me," said the Comptroller shortly.

"The truth is," said the Treasurer, 'that he's not a nice dog. There's only one man who ever has got on with him, and that's the Master of the Horse.'

"But I've just fired him," said the King. 'Besides, he's got off with Sunset. That's what I fired him for.'

"Here the door was opened, and a servant put in his head.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, 'but I think the dog wants to go out.'

"By the time the King, with his daughter in his arms, had been twice round the forecourt, over the drawbridge, down a steep bank into a ploughed field, through a brick, in and out of an orchard, over two walls and along an evil-smelling drain, his mind was made up.

"As the Court arrived—

"Issue two orders," he said faintly. 'First, all cats are to be collected and kept under lock and key until further notice. Penalty for disobedience, Death.' He nodded at the bloodhound, who was eating heartily. 'Heaven knows where I should be, but for that sheep's head.' He paused to mop his face. 'Secondly, the Master of the Horse is to be found forthwith.'

"Half an hour later the two men once more faced each other. The Master of the Horse had Sunset in his arms, with the dog stretched at his feet. The King had his cheque-book in his hand.

"Supposing," said the King, 'supposing you rubbed that ring.'

"Why?" said the Master of the Horse, glancing at the beautiful face upon his shoulder. 'I'm not in any trouble.'

"The King fingered his beard.

"You can't go on like this," he observed. 'It's—it's unheard of.'

"It is at present," was the reply. 'But it'll soon get about. You know what Scandal is.'

"The King rose to his feet and took a short turn.

"When he felt better—

"What," he said, 'do you suggest?'

"A priest," said the Master of the Horse. 'Oh, and witnesses.'

"After several more turns the King sent for a priest.

"After all," he said to himself, 'she can't respond; so I can always get it annulled. And what price "undue influence"?''

"At the critical moment, however,



Sunset responded heartily. Then she released the bloodhound and blew her father a kiss.

"'I'd no idea,' she said, 'you could go so well. The way you flew those walls! But I do wish you'd have that drain cleaned out. I don't think it's healthy.'

"The King was nothing if not a man of action.

"He seized his son-in-law by the ear and fell into a trance.

"This was a real one, and lasted for several days. So the King got a bit of his own back.

"The first thing he did upon recovery was to make the practice of ventriloquism a capital crime."

There was a long silence.

At length—

"Don't say you're asleep?" said Toby.

Cicely started guiltily.

"Certainly not," she said. "Go on. Sunset went into a trance. I suppose the uncle did that. What then?"

"Oh, the vixen!" said Rage. "Just 'cause I wouldn't get her coat. Never mind. 'Full many a tale is told to float unheard, And waste its neatness on the *distract* ear.' Besides, it's the effort that counts." He sighed. Then, "D'you often laugh in your sleep, Cicely?"

So soon as she could speak—

"I'm not surprised," said Miss Voile in a shaking voice, "that Rachel turned you down."

"But she didn't," said Rage comfortably. "It was I who, er, withdrew. What shall we do to-morrow?"

Cicely rose to her feet and smoothed down her dress.

"Why," she said, "should we do anything?"

"Because we get on so well. You don't want to be loved, because men mean nothing to you. Well, I should think I'm one of the few men living who could withstand successfully your physical and mental charms. Besides, you find me convenient—very convenient. On the other hand, while I've not the slightest desire to bear down any woman, most of the women I know seem to expect to be overwhelmed. Of course I except my Aunt Ira. She's in a class of her own."

"Is she so strong?" said Cicely.

"It's not exactly strength. It's sheer weight. She's rather like lava. Her personality submerges—flattens. After half an hour of her I'm all over at the knees.

Add to this that she's a bigoted mid-Victorian, has made a will in my favour and is enormously rich, when you'll see that our relations are delicate indeed. She's very hot on what she calls 'round' dances and the decay of chaperonage."

"She would like Biarritz, wouldn't she?" said Miss Voile.

Her companion shuddered.

"The bare idea," he said, "is bad for my heart. What were we saying? Oh, I know. I was indicating the convenience of our future conjunction."

"Perhaps you're right," said Cicely slowly. "Let's get up early and go up into the mountains."

"What exactly," said Rage, "do you mean by 'early'?" By the time I'm able to differentiate between the bell and light switches which dangle over my bed, and so obtain breakfast, it's usually about eight."

"Let's leave at five, Toby."

"Five!" screamed Toby. "Why, that's B.C.—Before Cockcrow. You oughtn't to talk about such hours."

"All right," said Cicely. "I'll get someone else to take me. I wonder if Teddy Bligh would."

"Firkin's the man," said Rage. "He's mug enough for anything. You ask Firkin." A dreamy look stole into Cicely's eyes.

"The trouble is," she said, "that either of them'll make love."

"Well, it would be asking for trouble, wouldn't it, Cicely dear? Up at dawn, and then hey! for the mountains in the half-light and a two-seater. What?"

"Don't you think," said Miss Voile, "that, as I want to so much, it'd be a friendly act if you were to step into the breach?"

"I think it'd be more than friendly," said Rage. "Almost—almost familiar."

"Once you're up," said Cicely, "you feel most awfully fit."

"So I've heard," said Toby. "It's a compelling phrase that, isn't it? 'Once you're up.'"

Miss Voile began to laugh.

"I give in," she said. "Fix your own time, Toby, and I'll be there."

Captain Rage pulled his moustache.

"My dear good child," he said, "I don't want to spoil your day. If it'll really amuse you to leave at five—"

"Oh, I should love it, Toby. I've always wanted to drive up into the dawn. You see, with summer time it'll be four really."

"Yes, I—I'd thought of that," said Toby.



"And we'll have the roads to ourselves, and you can let her out and—and—oh, it'll be glorious."

"So be it," said Toby Rage. "Five B.C. to-morrow as ever is."

"Oh, you darling!" cried Cicely.

"And listen," continued Toby. "Quarter 'f an hour I'll give you for the sake of your pretty face. But at five-fifteen sharp I shall return to bed."

Cicely blew him a kiss.

"Ugh," said Toby.

\* \* \* \* \*

The blue landaulette rolled over the

saddle of Sévignac and began to descend slowly into the valley of Laruns.

"Pull the check-string," said Mrs. Medallion. "I wish to admire the view."

Her companion put out her head and called on the driver to stop.

As she resumed her seat—

"I wish," said Mrs. McDallion, "you'd do as you're told. I ordered a cord on his arm, and there it is. Why avoid a convenience?"

"To tell you the truth," said Miss Woolly, "I was afraid he mightn't understand."

"In that case," said Mrs. McDallion, "we could have enlightened him."

Head in air, she turned to survey the prospect.

"Isn't it enchanting?" said Miss Woolly, gazing over her shoulder.

"No," said Mrs. McDallion. "It isn't. And I wish you wouldn't exaggerate. My father detested exaggeration. He said it was subversive of conversational dignity."

"Well, it's very restful, any way. Look at those sheep."

"A flushed and hatless Cicely pulled herself abreast of the parapet."





"I refuse," said Mrs. Medallion. "We've passed four flocks on the road since we left Pau, and I'm sick and tired of sheep. What is abundantly clear is that France is a very rich land. Why doesn't she pay her debts?"

"I can't imagine," said Miss Woolly.

"I'll tell you," said Mrs. Medallion. "Because she and her creditors are friends. You can't combine friendship with business. It's an inviolable rule. Pull the check-string."

"This is Miss Voile, Aunt  
Ira—Miss Cicely Voile."

The landaulette proceeded silently and at a sober pace.

Presently the road became a curling shelf, with, on the left, first, a miniature wall and, then, a ten-feet drop into gay meadows.





On the right, a rough and tumble of rock, with rags and tatters of greensward interspersed, climbed to the mountains. Except for an open car, drawn up by the miniature wall, and an approaching waggon, the road was empty.

As luck would have it, the waggon was about to pass the car when the landaulette arrived. There not being room for three vehicles abreast, the landaulette had to wait. This she did quietly enough six paces away.

The waggon went rumbling. . . .

Then the bullocks saw Mrs. Medallion's blue parasol and sought to leave the road. Their frantic owner strove to correct them with blows and howls. . . .

Pipe in mouth, the fair-haired man who had been tightening a bolt beneath the grey car's wing watched the scene with a smile. . . .

Mrs. Medallion put up her lorgnettes.

"Desire that man to come here," she said. "He's my nephew."

Miss Woolly descended and went up to Captain Rage.

"Please will you come," she said, "and speak to Mrs. Medallion."

Toby started violently, dropped his spanner and snatched his pipe from his mouth.

Then, with a sickly smile, he took off his hat. . . .

As the waggon swayed by—

"How d'ye do?" said Mrs. Medallion, extending her hand. "Don't you feel well?"

"P-p-perfectly, thank you, Aunt Ira," stammered the unfortunate Toby, touching her glove. "D'you feel all right? I mean . . . I—I do hope you're well," he added piously.

After a long look—

"My health," said Mrs. Medallion, "leaves little to be desired." She turned to her companion about to re-enter the car. "Miss Woolly, this is my nephew, Captain Rage. Captain Rage—Miss Woolly." The two bowed. "Why are you here, Toby?"

"Well, I'm—I'm really at Biarritz," stammered Rage. "You know, taking—taking a sort of holiday there."

"Well, I'm really at Pau," said his aunt, staring. "Taking a sort of rest. I don't know what from, but the doctors advised the change. What's your trouble? Nerves?"

"Good Heavens, no, Aunt Ira." He laughed uneasily. "I'm perfectly well. But

I was so—so dumbfounded. You know. Er, er, astonished."

"'Dumbfounded' will do," said his aunt. "I'm quite familiar with the word."

"Of course," said Toby. "What I mean is I never dreamed—"

"Why should you?" said his aunt. "Neither did I. But I don't stammer about it. Tell me about Biarritz."

"Oh, it's not much of a place," said Toby cautiously. "And it's awfully full. I spend most of my time getting away from it. I like the peace of—"

"Are there public dances there?"

Captain Rage appeared to consider.

"I believe they do dance at the Casino," he said. "Yes, I'm almost sure they do."

"Are you, indeed?" said his aunt. "It's wonderful how these things get about, isn't it?" Toby blenched. "Where is the English Church?"

Painfully conscious that his reply would almost certainly be compared with that of Baedeker, Captain Rage swallowed.

"Well," he said, "when you get out of the hotel, instead of going down to the sea—"

"Toby darling."

The clear voice floated musically over the miniature wall.

The worst had happened.

Cicely had awaked.

After one frightful moment, Captain Rage plunged on desperately.

"In—instead of going down to the sea, you—you turn—"

"Somebody," said Mrs. Medallion in a freezing tone, "*somebody* appears to desire your attention. Didn't you hear them call?"

Her nephew put his head on one side and appeared to listen.

"Did they?" he said.

Grimly his aunt surveyed him.

"You must be deaf," she said. "Never mind. If you don't answer, I daresay they'll call again."

She was perfectly right.

Almost immediately—

"Toby darling," cried Miss Voile, "*have you got a cigarette?*"

There was an awful silence.

Miss Woolly, who had a keen sense of humour, set her white teeth and fought to suppress her mirth. Head up, Mrs. Medallion stared in the direction from which the voice had come, as one who has detected an unlawful and offensive smell. Fingers to mouth, Captain Rage was glancing over his



shoulder with the nervous apprehension of the escaped felon who has heard his pursuers decide to bomb his lair.

Two sweet pretty hands appeared upon the miniature wall.

The next moment, looking extraordinarily lovely, a flushed and hatless Cicely pulled herself abreast of the parapet.

Toby stepped forward, put his hands under her arms and lifted the lithe figure on to the road.

Then he turned to his aunt.

"This is Miss Voile, Aunt Ira—Miss Cicely Voile. Cicely, this is my aunt, Mrs. Medallion."

Cicely stepped to the car and put out her hand.

"How d'ye do?" she said with a charming smile.

In stony silence Mrs. Medallion touched the slight fingers.

"Are you engaged to my nephew?"

"Of course I am," said Cicely. "That's why we're alone. We got engaged last night, so we're spending to-day in the mountains to recuperate. D'you think he'll make me happy?"

The ghost of a smile stole into Mrs. Medallion's face.

"That depends on his wife," she said. "Why didn't he tell me?"

"We haven't told anyone yet," said Cicely Voile. "And I expect he's shy. Men are funny like that, you know. They seem to regard their engagement as a confession of weakness."

"It frequently is," said Mrs. Medallion. She turned to her nephew. "Toby, you're a fool. Why shouldn't you be engaged?"

Captain Rage grinned sheepishly.

"No reason at all," he said. "Only—only it was all rather sudden, you know. The—the words wouldn't come."

"Yes, I noticed that," said his aunt. "They still seem rather reluctant."

"What did I say?" said Cicely, sliding an arm through Toby's and addressing his aunt. "You see? He's ashamed of himself. He feels his position. They can't help it. Where are you staying, Mrs. Medallion?"

"At Pau. Should I like Biarritz?"

"I should come for the day. It's not very far. I think Pau's quieter, you know."

Mrs. Medallion regarded her.

"I heard you ask," she said, "for a cigarette."

"I didn't know you were here," said Cicely Voile. "I shouldn't smoke before you, because I'm younger than you and so

it's up to me not to give you offence. I've got an aunt called Susan who simply loathes it. So I never smoke before her."

Mrs. Medallion turned to her companion.

"A very proper spirit," she said defiantly.

"Admirable," said Miss Woolly.

"Miss Voile, this is Miss Woolly, who bears with me."

Miss Woolly laughed, and Cicely stepped on to the running-board and put out her hand.

"It can't be a very hard life," she said.

"You're looking too well."

"I suppose you dance, child," said Mrs. Medallion.

"I do," said Cicely. "I love it. I know the dances of to-day aren't all they might be, but neither is anything else, for the matter of that. I imagine that convents are as conservative as ever, but outside them—"

"I doubt it," sighed Mrs. Medallion.

"Look at the gaols. I don't believe in torture, but I always had a weakness for the discouragement of crime. Never mind. Come back to Pau now, and I'll give you some tea. Toby!"

"Yes, Aunt Ira."

"Take Miss Voile out of sight and give her her cigarette. I think she's earned it. Then follow us back to Pau. By the way, d'you feel better now?"

"Much better, thank you, Aunt Ira," said Captain Rage.

"What a fool you are," said his aunt.

"I don't expect to be welcomed, but misprision of my understanding I cannot endure. But for your pretty advocate, your ghastly endeavours to dissemble would have cost you extremely dear." Her nephew quailed. "Besides, aren't you proud of her?"

"I should think I was," said Toby heartily.

"Then act accordingly," said Mrs. Medallion. "And if ever again you want to throw dust in my eyes, throw dust—not clods of earth. If you can manage to blind me, that's one to you. But I won't be assaulted."

"I'm very sorry, Aunt Ira," said Toby humbly.

"I'm glad to hear it." She turned to address Miss Voile. "Now don't go and heal those stripes as soon as my back is turned. Give him the cold shoulder for a quarter of an hour. And please tell the driver to turn and take us to Pau. I shall expect you at four at the Hotel de France."

"Thank you very much," said Cicely.



"I'm sorry my entrance was so abrupt, but——"

"I wouldn't have missed it for worlds," said Mrs. Medallion. "It was—enchanting."

In silence the landaulette was turned and the ladies were driven away.

As the dust swallowed them up, Toby turned to his companion with a glowing face. Then he caught her hands and pressed them against his lips.

He looked up with shining eyes.

"Cicely darling," he cried, "you're an absolute brick."

Miss Voile disengaged herself.

"No endearments, please," she said calmly enough. "This is a serious business. I've compromised myself good and proper, you know. And until we're out of the wood I'd rather go slow—dead slow."

"My dear——"

"Don't call me your 'dear,'" cried Cicely, stamping her foot.

"It's 'without prejudice,'" said Toby.

"What about our engagement? That's 'without prejudice,' too. The trouble is we omitted to point that out to Mrs. Medallion."

"Well, I'm very sorry," said Toby.

"But what did you do it for?"

"Why do people go in after drowning men? Because they can't stand still and see them drown. I did it out of common humanity. When I looked over the wall I saw how matters stood—saw in a flash. It wasn't particularly bright of me. If you could have seen your face. . . . Well, there was only one thing to be done. The difficulty was how to do it. And then with her very first words she smoothed that away."

"Common humanity or not, it was a most handsome act. And I'm deeply, deeply grateful. I'll put things right, of course."

"How?"

"I don't know yet, but I will—before any damage is done. I'm afraid it's spoiled your day, and I'm frightfully sorry. But there you are. And now let's go to Eaux Chaudes and find some tea."

"Eaux Chaudes?" cried Miss Voile. "But we're booked to your aunt! Don't look so amazed. If I start on a thing I like to see it through. And what on earth's the use of all I've done if we don't——"

"I refuse," said Captain Rage. "As you've said, you're deep enough in. If I hadn't been so rattled——"

"I never said that," said Miss Voile. "And now please don't interfere. This is my show. You say you're grateful. Very well, then. Do as I say. I shan't get in any deeper by going to tea. I don't suppose it's a party."

"I wish you wouldn't," said Toby. "I—I don't like it. What with bein' heckled by that woman, then all of a sudden lugged out of the muck, an' then all dazzled an' blinded by the way you handled her, it never occurred to me that you were paying the score. It sounds ungrateful and selfish, but there you are. Now that I do see, for Heaven's sake have a heart. Don't make me feel more of a worm."

With a sudden movement Cicely put out her hands.

"Toby, I'm sorry," she said. "And please don't feel like a worm. It is so—so very inappropriate. I was so glad to help you." Rage took her hands in his. "I am so glad I've helped you. And I'm glad to go on helping you—awfully glad. And then we'll help each other—out of the wood. . . . I'm afraid it sounded as if I repented what I'd done. I don't, Toby, I don't. And I don't quite know why I said such rotten things. Only, when you called me 'darling' on—on the top of it all, it . . . seemed as if you were forgetting . . . that it's only—only a game."

Toby Rage looked into the great brown eyes.

"I—I believe I was," he faltered.

"Well, please don't, Toby dear," said Cicely Voile. "I'll tell you why. *I've banked on your not forgetting.* I've put—not exactly my honour, but my—my value in your hands. The moment that you forget I become cheap." The man started. "You won't have made me cheap. I shall have made myself cheap. Cheap in my own eyes—and yours. And I like you just well enough, Toby, not to want that."

"You know that I'd never——"

"You wouldn't at once. But after a little you'd see. Time makes things so painfully clear. Never mind. Now that I've told you, I'm sure that you won't let me down." She whipped her hands away and put them behind her back. "And now be nice to me, Toby, and give me a cigarette."

\* \* \* \* \*

Twenty-four hours had gone by, and the two were sitting again on the rolling moor. An urchin breeze darted and hung, Puck-like, in the brave sunshine, while



earth and sky and sea lifted up radiant heads. Time nodded drowsily over a golden world.

From a little fellowship of chestnuts in a neighbouring dell the pert insistence of a cuckoo cheered to the echo the excellence of present mirth. Out of the sweetness of a hawthorn a fragrant eulogy of idleness stole upon the air. The lazy hum of bees about their business swore by content.

Miss Voile, however, was not smiling, while Rage was regarding the jovial landscape with a perfectly poisonous stare.

"How," said Cicely, "are you getting on?"

Toby started and picked up a writing-pad.

"Give me a chance," he said. "I'm not a journalist. Besides, a letter like this takes some composing."

"It's got to go off to-night," said Cicely Voile.

"Well, don't you rush me," said Toby. "It's a very delicate job. Any fool can say 'The engagement's off,' but that won't do for Aunt Ira. What I've got to do is to word it in such a way as to stifle the instinct of cross-examination. Well, bein' an optimist, I'm not going to say it's impossible, but, if I can't do it, she won't come over for the day—she'll come for a week. I shouldn't wait for that. I've only one heart. But she'll metaphorically sack Biarritz."

"Oh, it's easy enough," said Cicely. "Shove it on to me. Say you find I'm a waster. I don't care."

"Well, I do," said Toby violently.

Cicely shrugged her fair shoulders.

Presently—

"Read me as far as you've got," she commanded.

Captain Rage cleared his throat.

*My dear Aunt Ira,*

*When I remember our fortunate encounter yesterday afternoon and your subsequent kind hospitality at the Hotel de France, I find it more than painful to have to tell you that the marriage which had been arranged between Miss Voile and myself will not take place. The rupture between us is still so recent that I am not in a condition of mind conducive to conducting correspondence, still less to recording in black and white the ruin of my hopes, but I feel that in view of the interest which you were good enough to take in my engagement, it is my duty, cost what it may, to put you in immediate possession of the unhappy truth. This, I fear, may possibly*

*affect your decision to come to Biarritz. I do not propose to weary you with the details of our sudden estrangement further than to confess. . .*

"Oh, that's maddening," cried Cicely, clapping her hands. "Go on."

"But I can't go on," cried Toby. "That's the devil of it. I don't know what to confess. All that first bit's eye-wash—quite all right as a lead. But now I've got to land a hell of a punch. The next two lines have got to do the trick. They've got to satisfy, allay and crush. They've got to satisfy her curiosity, allay her suspicion and crush her initiative."

"That's easy," said Miss Voile. "Give me the pad."

In a silence too big for words the writing-pad passed.

Cicely finished the sentence and threw it back.

*. . . that it is now quite clear that we do not and never did love one another.*

"That's no good," said Toby. "That's simply inviting investigation. How can you reconcile that with, er, with the 'Toby darling' of yesterday afternoon?"

"Then cut me out," said Miss Voile. "Say—"

*. . . clear that I do not and never did love her.*

How can she go behind that?"

"That," said Captain Rage, "would bring her over by return."

"Why?"

"Because the inference is that you still love me. Remembering the violent fancy she's taken to you, is it likely that she'd sit still and allow me to turn you down? She'd come over here like a bear robbed of her whelps—whelps."

Cicely stared upon the ground.

"Well, I'll tell you what," she said uncertainly. "Stick to my first suggestion and add these words."

She began to dictate slowly.

*You must not think this conclusion inconsistent or precipitate, because this is not, as you know, the first time that I have been engaged, while—*

"No, no. I can't say that," cried Toby. "It's—it's out of the question. She—I never told her about Leah."

"Leah?" cried Cicely. "Oh, you Mormon."



"I mean Rachel," said Rage hurriedly. "Leah—Leah was her second name."

Miss Voile stared at the sea with trembling lips.

So soon as she could trust her voice—

"The trouble is," she said, "you've written in the wrong strain—sounded the wrong note."

"That," said Toby, "I can entirely believe. When one's got to convey some singularly distasteful intelligence to a woman who invariably receives good tidings, first, as a personal affront and, secondly, as evidence of the messenger's mental deficiency, it is extremely easy to sound the wrong note."

In a shaking voice—

"Give me the pad," said Cicely.

Once more the writing materials changed hands. . . .

Sitting a little behind her, Toby frowned into the distance, thoughtfully pulling his moustache and stealing an occasional glance at the slim brown hand which was steadily driving the pencil across the grey-blue sheet.

Presently his eyes climbed to the exquisite face. . . .

There they rested.

This is not surprising. The man was human. And at that moment Cicely Berwick Voile was a sight for the high gods.

The girl was always beautiful. Her features and colouring alone established that. Hers was the gay, fresh beauty of Nature herself. It argued the Spring in her blood. She was radiant, eager. The expectation of her mouth, the light in her big brown eyes were living, breathing glories that lifted up the heart. But now my lady was grown pensive. She had exchanged her 'meadows trim, with daisies pied' for 'the studious cloister's pale.' Mirth sat in Melancholy's seat, adorning that cold throne as never did its mistress. Her serious mien, the droop of her precious lips, the way she would fling up her head to gaze for an instant seawards while she sought for a phrase—her breathless, glowing charm, plunged for the moment into the dignity of thought, made an arresting picture. Rage had not seen her like this. Few people had. This was as well. Heaven knows, she was dangerous enough. Amaryllis weaving a garland sends your heart to your mouth. But Amaryllis contemplative, pacing the garden of Philosophy, shall send the blood to your head.

Miss Voile turned suddenly to meet her companion's eyes.

Instantly both looked away—Toby at the parcel of chestnuts, and the girl at the broom by her side.

Presently—

"Here you are," she said quietly, passing the writing-pad.

Toby stared at the letter as at a death warrant.

*My dear Aunt Ira,*

*This is just a line to thank you very much for all your kindness yesterday and to say how much I am looking forward to seeing you here on Thursday. I quite expect it will be fine, for the weather seems settled now, and I think you will enjoy the run. It is impossible to mistake the road, which runs through some lovely country as well as that charming and historical old town, Bayonne. I shall expect you about half-past one, and shall be at the entrance to the hotel from one on in case you are before time.*

*I have no news except that Miss Voile and I have broken off our engagement, as we do not think we should get on together.*

*Always your affectionate nephew,*

*Toby.*

*P.S.—There is another road by Bidache, but I should not come by that because it is longer and not so easy to follow.*

"You see," explained Cicely, "the two outstanding characteristics of Mrs. Medallion are, first of all, her contrariness and, secondly, her conviction that all men are fools. Well, I've given her a glorious opportunity of indulging the former, and I've supported the latter by a piece of documentary evidence of which she will talk for years. In fact, I should think she'd have it framed. After this, she'd rather die than come to Biarritz. The bare idea of your waiting for hours at the entrance to the hotel, not daring to go away in case she arrives, will give her a better appetite for lunch than any Hula Hula that ever was shaken."

Captain Rage lifted his eyes to heaven.

"Trust a woman," he said, "to put it across a woman. Of course, I take off my hat. It's a work of art. That postscript alone. . . ."

He ripped the sheet from the pad, folded it very carefully and, after staring upon it, took out a cigarette case and bestowed the paper inside.

"Well, that's that," said Cicely, getting upon her feet.

"Here," said Toby. "You're—you're not thinkin' of going, are you?"



"Why not?" said Cicely calmly. "We came here to fix up that letter, and now it's fixed."

Toby swallowed.

"I know," he said. "But it seems a pity to rush off. I—I rather like this spot. Look at the sea over there, all—glassy. Reminds me of some hymn."

By a superhuman effort Miss Voile maintained her gravity.

"I've got to get back," she said.

"Oh, not yet," said Toby. "Not yet. Besides, I—I've—I wanted to tell you about Rachel."

Miss Voile appeared to hesitate.

Then she sat down.

"What about Rachel?" she said.

"Well, I—I made up Rachel," said Toby. "You know. Invented the nymph." He stared uneasily upon his finger nails. "Heaven knows why. I think I had some idea of makin' you think I was an old campaigner, with a trick or two up his sleeve." He hesitated. "Well, I'd like you to know I'm not. I've danced attendance once or twice—most men have—and been properly stung for my pains. But that's as far as it's gone. I've—I've never been engaged—before."

"I'm glad you told me," said Cicely. She turned a glowing face. "I knew it, of course." Toby started. "All along. But I'm glad you told me."

There was a long silence.

At length—

"You remember," said Toby, "what you said yesterday about my not letting you down?"

Cicely nodded.

"Well, if I've seemed off-hand since then, it's because of what you said. That's why I've not called you by name or—or told you how sweet you are. You see, it began as a game—'Without Prejudice,' but when you said what you did, you opened my eyes. . . . And then, suddenly, I realised that for me the game had slid into reality . . . that I had quite lost sight of the very first rule of the game. . . . And so—I had to stop. I couldn't call you 'darling' or speak of the stars in your eyes, because . . . I find you a darling and I love the stars in your eyes."

Cicely bowed her head.

The man continued slowly.

"Well, there you are. I've bought it. I've queered my rotten pitch. I suggested the blasted game. I gave it its footling label and let you come right in—under that

shelter. Now you're in balk, and I've got to let you go. . . . Don't think I'm trying to get out. I'm not. I'll post this letter to-night as I'm a living fool. But I'd give ten years of my life to call back the idle moment when I started that game."

For a moment the two sat silent. Then, as if by one consent, they rose to their feet.

Cicely put out a hand, and the man took it.

"Thank you, Toby," she said. "I knew I could bank on you. I put my value in your hands, and you've given it back. And I think you're perfectly right. It's a stupid game. And—and I'm very glad it's over."

Rage put her hand to his lips and turned away.

Her words were equivocal. There was a chance that she meant. . . . But the chance that she meant nothing must turn the scale.

"And—er—Toby."

"Yes."

"I'm afraid I made up Alfred."

"Yes, I thought you did," said Toby.

"Why?"

"Because the man isn't foaled who after an hour of your sweetness could refuse you anything. Besides, unless he was mentally deranged, once having got so far, no man on earth would ever have let you go."

"Perhaps—perhaps that's why he did," said Cicely.

Toby stared.

"But I thought you said—"

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of Alfred. There was—another man. He—he was such a dear. It never occurred to me that he was mad. His—his aunt wasn't. I mean—Oh, Toby!"

The man's arms were about her, and his cheek against hers.

"Cicely darling, d'you love me?"

"It sounds very weak, Toby dear, but I'm dreadfully afraid I do."

"My blessed lady," said Toby and kissed her mouth. . . .

"Oh, do be careful," said Cicely. "Love's a disease, you know. Supposing you caught it."

"You wicked child," said Toby. "I gave it to you."

"O-o-oh!"

"Yes, I did. I've had it for months and months. But I never knew what it was till . . ."

"When did you know, Toby?"

"At sixteen minutes past five," said Toby, "yesterday morning."





## THE SKY

THE rain-cloud's fringe reveals a tinge  
Of tawny light; the veil is lifting,  
And full and bright in sudden sight  
The countries of delight are drifting  
In golden hills and silver streams,  
A rapture of enchanted dreams.

Horizon-wide the driven tide  
Of curling foam and billow scurries;  
In chase behind, the urgent wind  
His flock to further pastures hurries,  
And men of alien face and name  
May view their beauties still the same.

Toil-jaded eyes perceive the skies  
A feast beyond the city's meanness,  
And sickened sense may make pretence  
Of scented woods and dewy cleanness.  
The clouds that shame the squalid town  
Have been an Alpine summit's crown.

Above the lands that futile hands  
Have soiled and scarred the pageant passes.  
The lakes, the plains, the mountain chains,  
The virgin woods and prairie grasses  
Pay tribute to Time's endless will:  
The changing skies are changeless still.

MAURICE HOLBORN.





A LOW BACKHAND VOLLEY.  
*Note the thumb placed along the handle.*

# LAWN TENNIS AS I SEE IT

By KATHLEEN MCKANE

*Photographs by Topical*

LAWN tennis is one of the good things in the world, one of the things that help and are really worth while. It may sound sententious and even old-fashioned to begin like that, but the ancient saying about a healthy mind in a healthy body is certainly old-fashioned, invented a very long while ago, and none the worse for

that. A strenuous hour on the tennis court in the fresh air and sunshine is magnificent medicine for a pessimist. Sport, exhilaration, pleasure and good exercise are all realised more quickly and conveniently at lawn tennis than in any other way that I know; and that is, perhaps, the chief reason why it is my first favourite amongst



outdoor games, why I love it and believe in it.

#### HOW IT BEGAN.

It is hard for me to say how I reached this point of view. It almost seems, on looking back, that I had the good fortune to be born at about the right time, and that the rising tide of lawn tennis caught and carried me along, though such an idea does not do justice to the real value of the game.

During the War, like many others, I had very little time for the outdoor exercise that has always seemed so necessary to me. I used to play tennis during week-ends and whenever I could, and that made me first realise fully its splendid possibilities. My first tournament was at Roehampton in April, 1919. My handicap was then somewhere about + 15, and I was soon defeated; but by the end of that season my handicap was "owe 30." That summer of 1919 was my beginning, and practically all I have to look back upon in the way of early experiences.

It is at the next stage that the critical period begins for all aspiring players. "To be or not to be" is then the question. The real work, the serious side of the game, then must come.

That phrase "the serious side of the game" has sounded odd and contradictory to our French friends in the past. In the days when cricket was the greatest English game, and peculiarly British, they used to say that the one thing an Englishman could not do was *play* cricket, meaning that, whilst we actually performed supremely well at the game, we made it hard work and not play at all.

#### WHY DOES ENGLAND LAG BEHIND?

Times have changed since then, and England, the Mother Country of all outdoor sports and games, is no longer supreme at them. Why is it that we have fallen back at lawn tennis? There is our climate always ready to take a large share of the blame and to deserve it, also our traditions and our conservatism, in spite of political pretensions in other directions. We have been backward in adopting the game on hard courts and on wood. The necessity for plenty of covered courts in this country is clearly indicated by our climate, yet we have been far behind France in this matter. Our temperament also seems to make development of the fullest capacity for lawn

tennis come much later in life, especially with men, than it does in other countries. We have much leeway to make up, but none of the disabilities from which we suffer at present is really serious. If we are not supreme at the game in the matter of quality, at least we have quantity—a greater number of keen young players, greater devotion to the game than any other European nation; for devotion to sport is one of our national heritages, as simple, safe, and certain as patriotism.

But in speaking of our increasing number of keen young players I am not thinking of schoolboys and schoolgirls, since serious tennis is not yet played to any great extent at school in this country. This has often been cited as a great disadvantage to the game in England. Yet there is much to be said for our tradition of team work in school games. But why should not team work be retained as well? Football at boys' schools would not suffer from the introduction of lawn tennis in summer, from which also the "team" spirit need not be absent. I am too keen and constant a player ever to be pessimistic about it.

#### THE FETTERS OF TRADITION.

Tradition and conservatism are amongst our greatest handicaps, although we owe them much. Our national tradition of sport, of course, I believe to be a good thing; but it seems to me to be about the clearest proof in the world that it is nonsense to say that you cannot have too much of a good thing. The early days of lawn tennis still persist with us, when it was a game of elegance on the lovely lawns of English country houses, when it would have been considered rather racy or bizarre, according to the point of view, to call it a sport. Our memories, of course, and our lives do not go back to the Victorian days of lawn tennis in England; but I am thinking of old pictures of gentlemen playing (!) in top hats, and ladies in incredible dresses balancing a racket daintily, as though it were a fan, and tossing a ball straight up into the air. Times have changed, but I believe that we do not shake off our fetters or even exchange them quite so quickly as other races, so that we are liable to lag behind for a time when there is rapid movement in any direction in the world of sport. There may be many people who regret the old-time elegance of lawn tennis, who think that, in expanding, the game has filtered downwards and degenerated; but if anything has been lost,



I believe that far more has been gained. Once a picturesque diversion for a few favoured members of society, lawn tennis is now a national asset.

#### ADVICE TO THE RISING GENERATION.

It is hard for me to say how I began and why I went on with lawn tennis; also it

girls, should begin very young. They should not start seriously before the age of about fourteen unless they happen to be exceptionally strong. Usually a girl of twelve is not able to hold a full-sized racket properly and hit the ball as it should be hit, because she is not strong enough in the arm. In order to make almost any sort of a stroke,



THE FINISH OF A FOREHAND DRIVE.

seems to me to be irrelevant—to have happened naturally and of its own accord. But it is much easier to give advice to others, especially those who are still children or, at any rate, very young, who contemplate taking up the game seriously.

I do not think that children, especially

she is obliged to hold the racket half-way up the handle, and that starts a bad habit and a bad style, which are very difficult to correct afterwards.

I have played many other games besides lawn tennis, especially badminton, lacrosse, and cricket, and the first of these is very



good indeed for children. It is easy for a little girl to begin, at badminton, to acquire the movements for overhead strokes, which do not often come naturally to girls, as they do to boys. A boy can generally chuck a stone or a cricket ball freely and easily, whereas a girl will only toss it underhand. I do not know why this should be so. Doubtless some profound combination of anatomy and psychology might be invoked to explain, but if I could bring that in, the Editor would probably use up at least one whole blue pencil.

There are some conspicuous exceptions to what I have just said about not beginning too young. Mademoiselle Lenglen was such an exception, and has remained an exception above other standards of brilliance ever since she began at the age of eleven, according to her own statement in *THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE*, though popular legend puts her commencing age even earlier than that. Miss Betty Nuttall is another exception, but she is obviously very much stronger than most children of her age.

Children, I think, ought to begin early to play ball games, and especially badminton, which, though not exactly a ball game, produces the same effect in training the mind and eye to work together naturally and easily, unconsciously and automatically. A kind of natural confidence, which might almost be called automatic precision, is an essential part of the equipment of every successful lawn tennis player. But even this most valuable weapon by itself is not enough. There must be "the fighting spirit," or "the winning temperament," whichever you like to call it, according to your point of view. To get that moral quality, the best brand of it, children should play games of all or any kinds, providing they involve activity and skill.

These views would, I know, be regarded as heresies by the French school of which Mlle. Lenglen is the most famous exponent. That most logical race believes in knowing what you want, and steering straight towards it without paying any attention to side issues or any other matters. In that way Mlle. Lenglen became world champion at a very early age. R. Lacoste has also achieved championship honours in his teens. But still I believe that it is better not to concentrate entirely on lawn tennis in childhood. No first-class player can be completely machine-made. He or she must have it naturally; and when that is so, the making of a great player should begin at

the age of thirteen or fourteen, not by a process of "cramming," which leads straight to staleness and even ultimately to nervous prostration, but by agreeable and intelligent practice and coaching, without too much tournament play.

#### THE TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GAME.

One can easily have too much tournament play in these days. The state of mind, the lowering of vitality, which can be brought about in this way are utterly out of keeping with the true spirit of the game, and can darken the destiny of the most promising young player. Particularly, such a player should not go in too much or too seriously for handicap events, for having to give odds cramps one's style, to put it crudely but with a double truth, more than anything else. In tournament play it is most necessary for the beginner to avoid falling into the habit of playing for safety, always with restraint, the game that scores only off the opponent's errors, for a brilliant, world-beating type of game never was, and never will be, developed in this way.

But, it may be urged, there are many, perhaps the great majority, whose ambitions are not so high. Even if that is so—and private, secret ambition is a curious thing—I still believe that far more good will be got out of lawn tennis by those who avoid dropping into the safe, stonewall type of game, who do all they can to acquire free hitting strokes and the easy, delightful style that goes with them.

#### VARIETIES OF LAWN TENNIS.

Many people who are as yet only casually interested in lawn tennis do not realise that there are now three games under the one title—the game on grass, which is the oldest, of course, and the games on hard courts and on wood. Except for the fact that a court with a wooden surface is invariably indoors, I think that it provides the best game of the three. Every bound is a true one, and you can make your own strokes in a free and easy style, knowing for certain that the ball will bounce as it should—that unforeseen accidents will not occur either to help or hinder your tactics. The game is also faster than on any other surface. Practice on wood, therefore, does one more good than any other form of play. If you have the right type of rubber-soled shoe for the particular wooden court on which you happen to be, the footing is perfect. The background is also very good, because the ball is easier



to see against a stretch of green wall than anything else. Being able to see the ball so well helps one to acquire the automatic faculty of watching it properly under ordinary outdoor conditions which may be far less favourable.

Yet a really good grass court may be

ball bounces truly almost always. But, unfortunately, there are very few really good grass courts in England, and many bad ones which tend to make one get always too close to the ball for fear it should not rise enough to make it takable in proper style. The average club courts get very much knocked about, and wet weather makes it impossible to play one's game for the same reason—that the ball will not rise.

The hard court has the great advantages of being out of doors, of not being too much affected by rain, and of being playable all the year round, even in this country. The high-bounding balls which it produces encourage players to develop a free swing and the fast, hard-hitting game that comes with it. But hard courts, as at present laid in this country, often develop a loose surface, which gives the worst foothold imaginable and makes it very difficult to get off the mark quickly. Progress is sure to be made in the construction of hard courts, and I think on the whole that they

are the best to learn on. The future also seems to lie with them. They give the greatest amount of opportunity and facility for play. Thanks to hard courts, the game has known its greatest expansion.

SPORT AND THE BUSINESS ELEMENT.

In this hurried world, in this kaleidoscopic



A HIGH BACKHAND VOLLEY TAKEN ON THE RUN.

more enjoyable to play on, because it is out in the open air. Perhaps that means more to me than to most people, because I have played and enjoyed so many different outdoor games all my life. The grass surface, moreover, is soft and pleasant for the feet, and also gives a perfect footing when dry. On the centre court at Wimbledon the



age, things come upon us without our reckoning on their coming in advance, or offering any sort of reception except acceptance. Lawn tennis has got to its present stage somewhat in that way. It has crept into our national life, penetrating gradually and peacefully to all classes. And now people sometimes write indignantly to the

of us to let things go of their own accord up to a certain point without realising that anything is happening, and then suddenly to "sit up and take notice"—even to act.

I believe that the point up to which things have gone of their own accord is rather a crucial one for the future of lawn tennis.



THE BEGINNING OF A BACKHAND DRIVE.

papers, complaining of the inadequate number of public courts provided in the parks and elsewhere for the masses who desire to play lawn tennis. It is strange and odd. Carlyle would not have complained of the insufficiency of public courts without first marvelling for several pages at there being any at all. But it is characteristic

I believe that there is a fear of the business element, the "getting and spending" mania, creeping in and spoiling the sport, as it seems to me to have done with football. The presence of world-famous players and the prospect of big gate money should not necessarily spoil sport, but sometimes do so in fact.



## A TOUCH OF THE RACKET "MAKES THE WHOLE WORLD KIN."

But there is no doubt that the increasing popularity of lawn tennis gives to thousands of people a far better recreation than cards or billiards or the cinematograph can ever provide. The entry lists in open tournaments are, perhaps, getting too big for the good of the game as a sport, but they bring people together in a way and for a purpose against which it seems to me nothing can be said, so long as finance does not play too big a part in these events. They bring people together and they bring nations together. I have played in and watched many matches on the Riviera in which all four players were of different nationality, and yet those concerned—the referee, the umpires, and the audiences—did not, I suppose, reflect that there was any special significance in such matches. Mlle. Lenglen is, I believe, more in the eyes of the world than any other

Frenchwoman now that Sarah Bernhardt is dead. Tilden and Dempsey are probably better known to the people on this side of the Atlantic than any great American, however eminent. Reflect upon this and take it seriously for a moment. You may conclude that there is more hope in sport—and particularly lawn tennis—than in any number of international conferences between professional statesmen. But the lawn tennis world must be careful to avoid becoming professional.

But for lawn tennis I might never have seen the lights of Roquebrunne and Cap Martin shining across the Bay of Monaco from the terrace of Monte Carlo, or the skyscrapers of New York, for the matter of that. But there are other things, it may be urged, which can decorate one's life with equally fine, or finer, pictures. That may be. One takes what comes to hand, and when it makes hand and arm and body strong, one is happy about it.

*Another interesting article by Miss McKane in the next number will deal with questions of method and various points of technique.*



## THE ROAD.

**T**HE road, the road, the weary road,  
I'll follow it to thy abode;  
From grey to grey the livelong day,  
I'll follow, follow all the way.

The sun-red road, the dust-deep road,  
By beggars trod, where princes rode,  
If so it be it leads to thee,  
It matters not how great the load.

It matters not how steep the road  
That brings me to thy green abode,  
Nor yet the lures and lanes that stray  
By easier way, by easier way.

No matter what the long leagues say,  
I only hear the crickets play,  
A million feet beneath the heat,  
Beating time to my heart's beat.

No matter what the day shall send,  
Beyond this bend, beyond that bend,  
I know somewhere you'll meet me there,  
Where all roads end, where all roads end!

LLOYD ROBERTS.



# THE BLINDNESS OF PITULUK

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

**S**TEERING north by west up Baffin's Strait, and passing Amadjauk Harbour on the east, with Salisbury Island well into the south, you will make Cape Dorset—that is, if you are weather-wise and succeed in bucking through the ice-pack. Further north comes the big bend that turns into Fox Channel, and so to Greenland waters.

From the naked ribs of Baffin Land, Cape Dorset thrusts a gigantic thumb into the cool, green ocean. Past its rubbed and fretted apex streams annually a great procession, belched, grinding, from the Arctic. Month after month it ramps by, broken occasionally into pond-like gaps where the square flipper suns himself on the trembling floe, and the dark-eyed jar seal falls prey to white bears marooned and adrift on the tumbled plain.

At all this, Pituluk, a lean Husky, had gazed calmly for years. In winter his igloo huddled low in a wrinkle of the shore. In summer his topeck crowned a little ridge from which the water ran both ways when it rained. And with him lived Tuktu, the Caribou, and Kugiyuk, the Swan.

They were old, friendless, and decrepit, but not in any way impressed by the fact that they owed these declining years to the good nature of Pituluk. Tuktu was lame, and had a withered arm and a nasty, complaining temper, while Kugiyuk, even older than her husband, was something like a piece of sinew that has been left out in the sun. What Pituluk, a large, easy-going man, gave them they took as if it were a right, and when food was scanty, as not infrequently happened, they bombarded him with complaint and criticism that seemed to slide like drops of rain from his oily skin.

Kugiyuk had black eyes that shifted as though greased in their sockets, and stumps

of ancient, rusty teeth whose strength had long since vanished with much tugging at sinew and gnawing at the edges of walrus hides.

In the warm weather Pituluk fished for salmon, and shot white foxes as they feasted on dead whales driven ashore by the run of Arctic currents. Sometimes he faced a she-bear that lounged forth lean and vicious, with the cub she had suckled for months in a snow-covered crevice. There was no difficulty about summer. The caribou were fat, and his guests better-tempered.

But when winter arrived, with Unorri, the North Wind, both land and sea tightened up like the snapping of the lock in a Hudson Bay musket, and the ragged outlines of beach and ridge were smoothed down and plastered over. As soon as he could find packed snow, Pituluk built his igloo, and then began the long yearly struggle against the gods of the out-of-doors. The foxes lost the mangy, blue tinge of earlier months, becoming bleached like ice and hard to see. The salmon backed into deep water. The caribou retreated inland, and the square flipper came up to breathe in places not easy to find. And when one walked abroad, it often happened that one saw only the great form of a solitary he-bear, rocking his arrow-shaped head as he stalked out to the edge of the ice to fish.

In such times Tuktu and Kugiyuk were hard to live with. The old woman reckoned her years by the number of times she had seen the pack-ice march down from Boothia Gulf. Seventy-five times she made it. Tuktu was nearly as old. Staring at them as he sat on the snow ledge of his house, mending a spear, Pituluk wondered why the aged should become so cross. They had nothing to do but eat and sleep. He did not mind their ugliness, for somehow that fitted into



everything else, but to be scolded through most of the short days of summer and through half of the much longer nights of winter had begun to wear into him, just as a badly-sewn seal boot will wear the skin off one's instep.

If he were asked why under these circumstances he continued to shelter this thankless couple, Pituluk could not have told you. It may have been that he had not moral courage to discard them to death; but—much more likely—it was because the law of the North provides that what is enough for one can generally be made sufficient for two, and even for three at a pinch. Also there was the probability that if he did turn

hooded head pushed through. He saw that the old woman was right, and chewed the faster.

"So many times he comes, and with nothing."

Pituluk cleared the tunnel and, throwing back his hood, put his hand into a stone bowl. This sat over a single spear-head of flame rising from a stone lamp. Dipping up water, he bathed his eyes.

"I saw but one caribou—a coast caribou. It was too far. My eyes are sick. It is the blindness that comes."

Tuktu laughed harshly. "What difference will that make to your hunting?"

Pituluk closed his burning lids, then



"To the left!" screamed Kugiyuk.  
'No, that is too much. Now!'"

them out, he would meet them later on in the place where there is always plenty of food, and be faced with accusation as well as complaint.

It fell on a hard day when Pituluk returned from a fruitless tramp over leagues of tumbled ice, where the wind drove the drift snow stinging into his face, that his eyes were very hot and sore. At this he was a little anxious, and regained the igloo with nothing but two patches of frostbite to show for his work. Kugiyuk waited impatiently when she heard him crawling along the low tunnel. Presently she turned to Tuktu, who was chewing steadily at the last strip of seal meat.

"Again he has nothing."

Tuktu, to make sure, paused till the

opened them because they smarted the more.

"Perhaps it will make a difference to you. It is not many months since you have complained and called me a fool. Why, then, should you care if I stop hunting?"

Tuktu was nearing the end of his strip. "I did not know," he said, with a glance at the spear balanced against the curving wall, "I did not know that you had begun to hunt."

Pituluk did not answer, having just discovered that he could neither open nor close his eyes without hurting himself. He remembered thankfully that he had buried the dogs' harness and stamped it tight in the snow. That was all right. The dogs



could get along very well for a few days till his eyes were better.

As for the others, he only chuckled and blinked at the two shapeless forms working into their caribou skin bags. He would blow out the lamp presently and, placing flint and punk in a safe place, crawl into his own. There he would lie for a while, listening to the drone of cracked voices, while the wind pressed hard on the igloo roof, and far out in Fox Channel the sea-ice creaked all night long. He did not rest much. Then—he could not tell at what time—he heard Tuktu speak sharply.

“He sleeps better than he hunts.”

Pituluk tried to open his eyes, but the lids were fastened down with a sticky stuff that clung to his fingers when he touched it, and the pain was worse than ever. He felt the two looking at him and sat up.

“Blindness has come in my sleep.”

Kugiyuk struck fire, lit the lamp, and bent over him. All she could see of Pituluk’s eyes were two narrow slits full of something that looked like frozen blubber, only it was soft. She beckoned to Tuktu.

“It is true. He is blind.”

The hunter moved despairingly. She looked at him again, then got back on to the ledge, where she and the old man whispered, their glistening faces close together. Presently Tuktu also inspected the sick man.

“Water!” groaned Pituluk. “Bring it to me—I cannot see.”

Kugiyuk slid down. The big man had begun to feel his way across to the stone bowl. She reached ahead of him and handed it quickly to Tuktu.

“There is no water.”

“In the night I was thirsty and drank,” quavered her husband. He set the bowl behind him and covered it with a robe.

Pituluk tried to think of the words he once heard a whaling captain use when he was very angry. They struck him at the time as good words, and there was nothing in the Husky language to express what a whaling captain seemed to feel so often. He could not remember them. Nevertheless, he knew there was water in that igloo. A little later, when the two went out, he tried to make fire and melt some for himself. But he only hit his fingers with the flint. He was sorry now that he had not built the igloo out on the ice, even though the wind was worse, because he could have fished through the floor. His grandfather, being also blind, had caught many fish. Then he

was more than ever convinced there was water near, and, fumbling about, touched the bowl under the robe. It was already half frozen, but a good drink still remained. He drained it, put the bowl aside, and groped back. The water lay cold on his stomach, but he felt hot and very angry.

Outside, at a little distance, Tuktu and Kugiyuk shivered behind a cairn of stones and talked earnestly.

“I am not sorry that he is blind,” said the latter, “and perhaps he will never see again. Then we can take what he has, and, being rich, will go and live with the tribe at Amadjauk Harbour. It is many years now since Pituluk got angry about that girl and came away.”

Tuktu nodded. “When I was in Amadjauk Harbour I saw a box that had a devil in it and, making sound, talked like a white man. The box is still there, but the devil is asleep and silent. Sulkenulug saw it last summer. I should like to hear that.”

She glanced at the igloo, of which the ivory dome was just visible. “You will hear it without doubt. How long can a man live without food?”

“If he be fat, for some time; but if he is cold and thin, not so long. I do not want to see Pituluk die.”

“We shall not be here. To-morrow we shall try and kill something, but he must not know if we have meat.”

“The smell of a hungry man is sharp,” said Tuktu dubiously.

“There will be nothing in the igloo to smell,” she grunted.

They went back and found the hunter feeling his spear, running his fingers along its coil of raw-hide. Where his eyes used to be were two lines of sticky white.

“I’m hungry,” he said dully.

Kugiyuk’s beady gaze rested on his brown, sightless face. She could just see it in the faint flicker of the lamp.

“That is nothing. We are all hungry.”

Pituluk’s lips lifted. “Do we die here—all of us?”

“Perhaps,” put in Tuktu, “we should have starved in any case.”

The blind man stumbled to the mouth of the tunnel and stretched himself across it.

“Then we shall die together.”

For the next few hours it was very quiet in the igloo. The grey of the sky faded, to be succeeded by a sparkling light of intense cold. Stiffer grew the frost, till the very bones of the hidden earth seemed to shiver and contract. Across the field-ice sharp



cannon-like reports zigzagged out to open water, while the split floes crumpled into irregular ridges of irresistible expansion. The sky, ineffably high and clear, was sown with a host of diamond-pointed lights, that became pallid against the curtain of green-and-yellow flame that hung palpitating in the north. With a low whining, the dogs scratched deeper, till, curled into balls of fur, each lay in his own pit beneath the surface of the driven snow. It was all hard-bitten, bleak and unutterably grim, and only on the far expanse of open sea was there any semblance of life or movement.

Hours later something did move on the ridge behind the igloo, and for a moment a great shape with narrow skull, long, lean body and huge flat paws was outlined against the sky. It stood, gaunt and menacing, swaying its white head, gathering into its black nostrils whatever faint odour might be abroad on that crisping night.

A dog stirred in his pit, thrusting a nose into the nipping frost, while the long hair lifted on his spine. For a second he waited thus with every mysterious instinct thrilling in his chilled body. Then the nose lifted higher, and he flung his signal to the moon. Another dog took it up, and another. Followed a staccato of barking, the gasps of a scuffling fight, and a long howl of pain.

Pituluk woke with a start, for the sound of scratching of mighty claws came through the igloo wall. The brute had smelled its window of walrus membrane, and, beating off the dogs, was scaling the icy dome.

Tuktu slid down from his shelf, seized the spear, and began to stab weakly upwards. A wide paw crashed through. In the gap, against the twinkling stars, he saw the menacing head and shaggy throat.

"He will break the roof!" he panted. "Quick—the bow and arrows—very quickly!"

Kugiyuk snatched them up, trembling, and fitted a shaft to the taut sinew. But there was no strength in her arm. The tough wood defied her.

"Give it to Pituluk," croaked Tuktu.

"Can a blind man fight with a bear?" groaned the latter, not caring much whether he died or not.

"Pull, and I will guide you." Kugiyuk thrust the weapon into his hands. "Pull! In a minute he will come through."

Pituluk's fingers crooked round the cord. "Then it will be as you said," he answered grimly, "but I am glad to shoot once again before I die." The arrow-head came back

flush with the belly of the bow. A strong man was Pituluk, even in his blindness.

"To the left!" screamed Kugiyuk. "No, that is too much. Now!"

The sinew twanged, and simultaneously the great paw was withdrawn. Tuktu could see the savage head twist round, then the bear slithered down, his claws scraping deep grooves in the wall. As he touched the ground, there was a storm of frenzied barking, the snap of locking jaws, and a deep, angry cough. This dwindled gradually till there came silence.

Kugiyuk breathed hard. "He is gone, We are safe!"

Pituluk nodded. "Now we can die quietly."

Next morning, when the world was very dark to the hunter, the two ancient ones went out and laid their fingers in the grooves.

"He was a big bear," said Tuktu regretfully, "and without doubt there was much meat on him."

Kugiyuk did not answer. She was staring at a dog that lurched toward them, his belly bulging. He licked his long jaws contentedly. Her eyes narrowed.

"There is meat. Come!"

They followed the trail a few hundred yards to higher ground. There they found the bear, a broken arrow projecting from his throat, flanks and side torn and gaping, a great beast from whose bones half the flesh had been ripped by wild, sharp fangs. It was not only dogs that had feasted there, and the meat could not last much longer.

Tuktu chuckled. "There is enough left for such as us. See, we will not take it into the igloo, but keep it here under the stones. We will eat outside where Pituluk cannot hear us."

They ate as dogs eat, champing the torn flesh with rusty teeth, then, piling rocks on what remained, went back to the igloo.

"Where have you been?" demanded Pituluk suspiciously.

"To look for the bear."

"And you did not find him?"

"Would I not have brought you meat if we had found it?" replied Tuktu.

Pituluk said nothing, but he was aware of a difference he did not understand. Thinking very hard, it seemed that Tuktu's voice was rounder and fuller than before. By now the gnawing in his own stomach was such that he could not sleep. The others, however, did sleep. He whispered to them several times, and got no answer. Also it



had struck him that they did not move slowly and painfully any more like hungry people. They spoke as they always spoke,

he saw something yellow. Stooping, he found this to be the snow. He winked very hard, and the film over his sight lifted a little, and he just made out a narrow trail, tramped deep, that led up the hill. Stumbling along this, he came to a pile of stones.

An hour later Tuktu sat up suddenly and yawned.

"What is it?"

"It is nothing," said the hunter. "I went out to find if I could perhaps see, but everything is black."

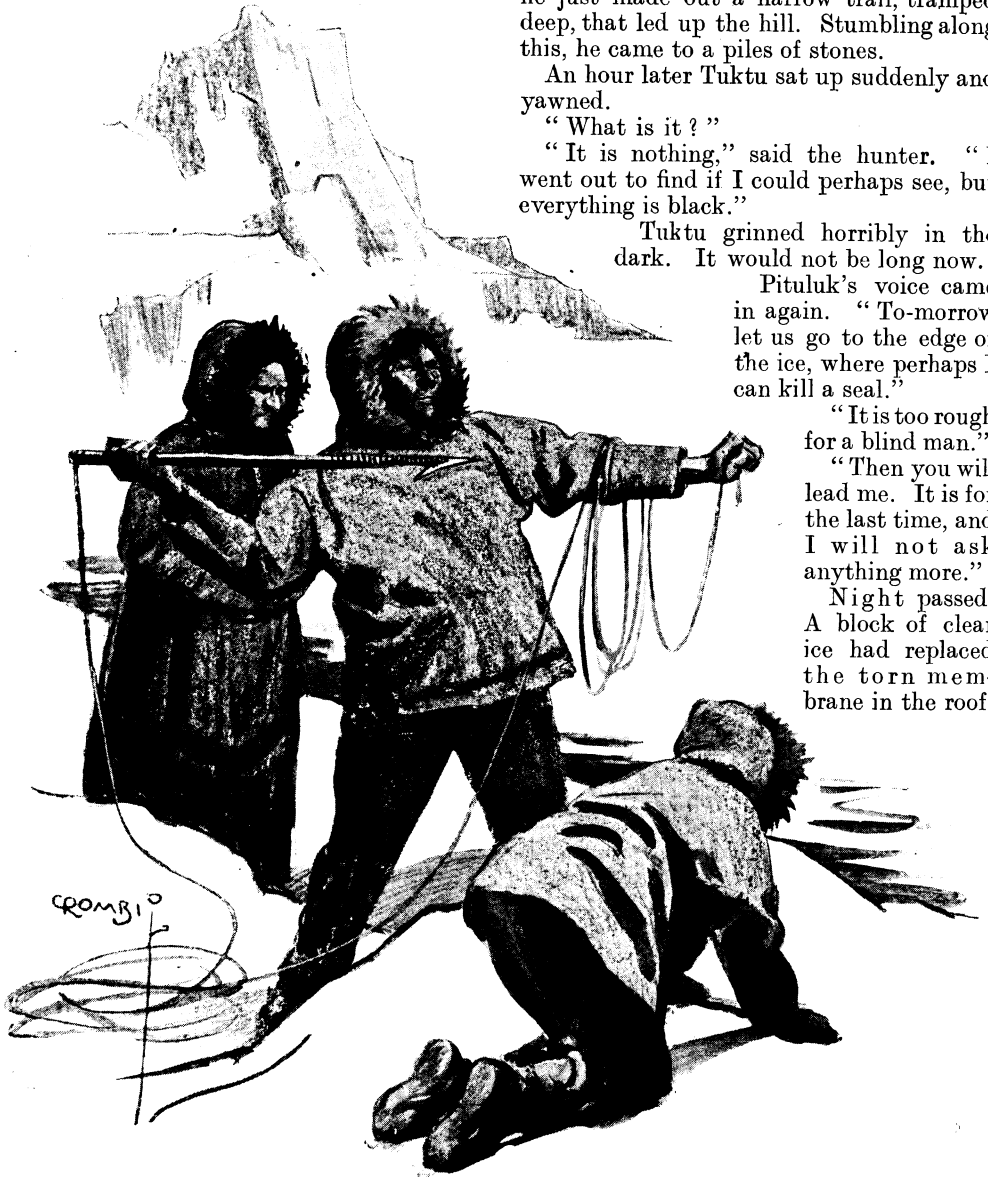
Tuktu grinned horribly in the dark. It would not be long now.

Pituluk's voice came in again. "To-morrow let us go to the edge of the ice, where perhaps I can kill a seal."

"It is too rough for a blind man."

"Then you will lead me. It is for the last time, and I will not ask anything more."

Night passed. A block of clear ice had replaced the torn membrane in the roof,



"Am I near enough to throw my spear?" he asked unsteadily. . . . "How far is the whale?"

while he noticed the crack in his own voice. So he lay still for another day.

Then, whispering again to make sure that they slept, he felt his way out through the tunnel. By this time he was very weak, but his eyes did not seem so sticky, and, lifting the lids apart with his fingers, he thought

and through this there filtered a pale, green light in which the hunter could make out two shapeless mounds that snored steadily for hours. As to Kugiyuk, he did not care much. She was only an old woman, and therefore an old fool, with the soul of a fox, from which not much could be expected.



But with Tuktü it was different. Here was a man who himself had once been a hunter, and was now prepared to look on, his belly full, while another hunter starved. Pituluk didn't think about the ingratitude of it so much as that Tuktü had written himself down as an outcast from the tribes of men.

That was it. An outcast! So Pituluk reached for the spear and re-coiled the rawhide line. The meat in his stomach had thawed, and he experienced sharp pains. But he was glad of them.

About noon, when the sun had mounted to the topmost point of its flat arc, they set out for the edge of the ice. Tuktü went first, then Kugiyuk, and lastly the hunter, who had stubbornly insisted on carrying the spear and line. "Let him carry it," thought the others. In his left hand he held one end of a thong at which the old woman jerked impatiently. It was a foolish trip, she decided, for one about to die. But as Pituluk peered through the narrow slit between his lids, the snow did not look yellow any longer. It was very familiar, and staring white. Darting swift and unobserved glances, he found that vision had returned. There was still stickiness about his eyes, but he did not wipe it off, and stumbled on, complaining weakly. Presently they came to open water.

"Ah," said Tuktü, "if Pituluk could only see now!"

ice floated a small whale fifteen feet long, the green water surging lazily against its smooth and shining back. It lay languid, and was lifted, glistening, in the emerald heave of the sea. Beside it pressed a calf, like a fragment detached from the mother floe, while intermittently came the deep and whistling breath that shot a slim and sparkling fountain into the air.

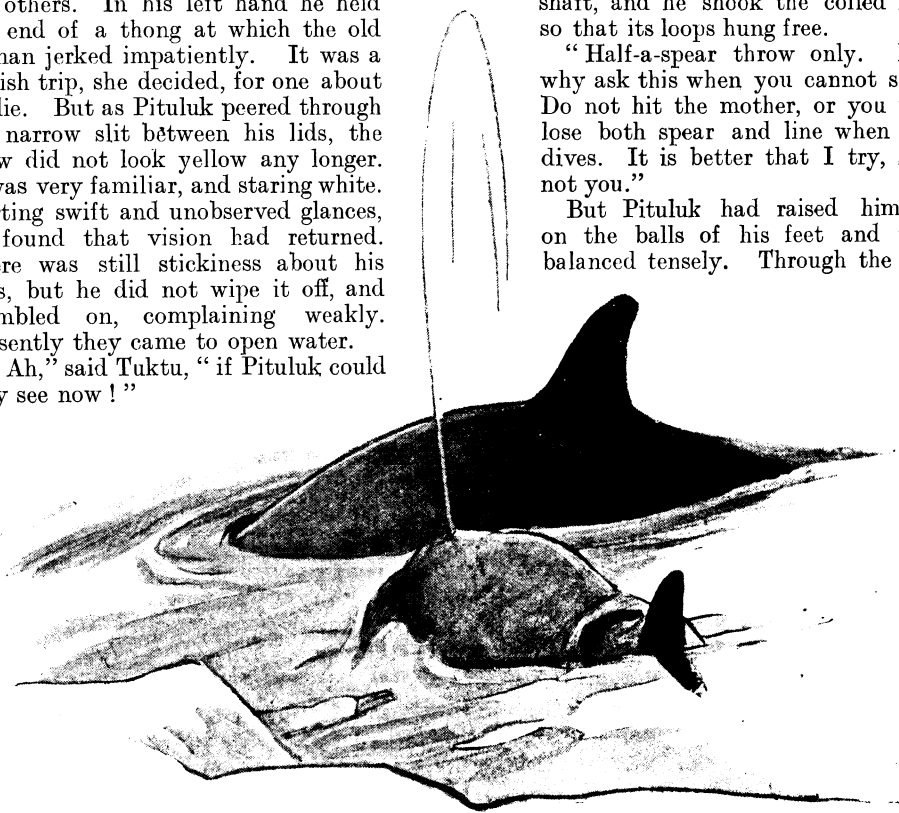
A thrill ran through Pituluk. "Am I near enough to throw my spear?" he asked unsteadily.

Tuktü smiled coldly. "It matters not. Throw it!"

"How far is the whale?" The hunter's brown fingers closed over the short, straight shaft, and he shook the coiled line so that its loops hung free.

"Half-a-spear throw only. But why ask this when you cannot see? Do not hit the mother, or you will lose both spear and line when she dives. It is better that I try, and not you."

But Pituluk had raised himself on the balls of his feet and was balanced tensely. Through the slit



"A small whale . . . beside it pressed a calf . . . while intermittently came the deep and whistling breath that shot a slim and sparkling fountain into the air."

"What is it?" demanded the hunter.

"A white whale and her calf. There is much meat, and they are very close. I would that my arm were not withered, or I could feed you well for many weeks."

But Pituluk had seen. Just against the

in his lids the length of the larger whale shone clear and glaring white. He stiffened for the throw, and the anger and contempt and hot hunger for revenge that were in him burst forth in a great shout.

"I am very ready to lose them, O Tuktü,



with the heart of a wolf ! Be thou ready to lose more ! ”

The shaft streaked forward, and, as the point sank through, he flipped the swinging coils into the air. They fell neatly over Tuktu's shoulders. The green water swirled violently as the great white body flashed downwards. The whale's ivory shape glimmered for an instant. Then the line tightened, and in a flash Tuktu was snatched forward and twitched into the depths. In another second the tail of the line squirmed over the edge.

Pituluk stared at the bubbles contentedly.

“ Let us go back to that pile of stones. I am very hungry.”

The white whales still cruise up and down Fox Channel, passing on into Boothia Gulf and the Arctic. From topeck and igloo the small, brown people watch them, and when they see beside a larger bulk the shining body of a calf, they chuckle to themselves and say : “ It is Tuktu.” And when the sparkling jet springs into the light, and the sound of blowing comes across the heaving water, they look at one another.

“ Ah-hoo-nah ! Ah-hoo-nah ! ” they repeat. “ It is Tuktu, who asks to be forgiven, down among the salmon.”



## HIGH SUMMER, GRASMERE.

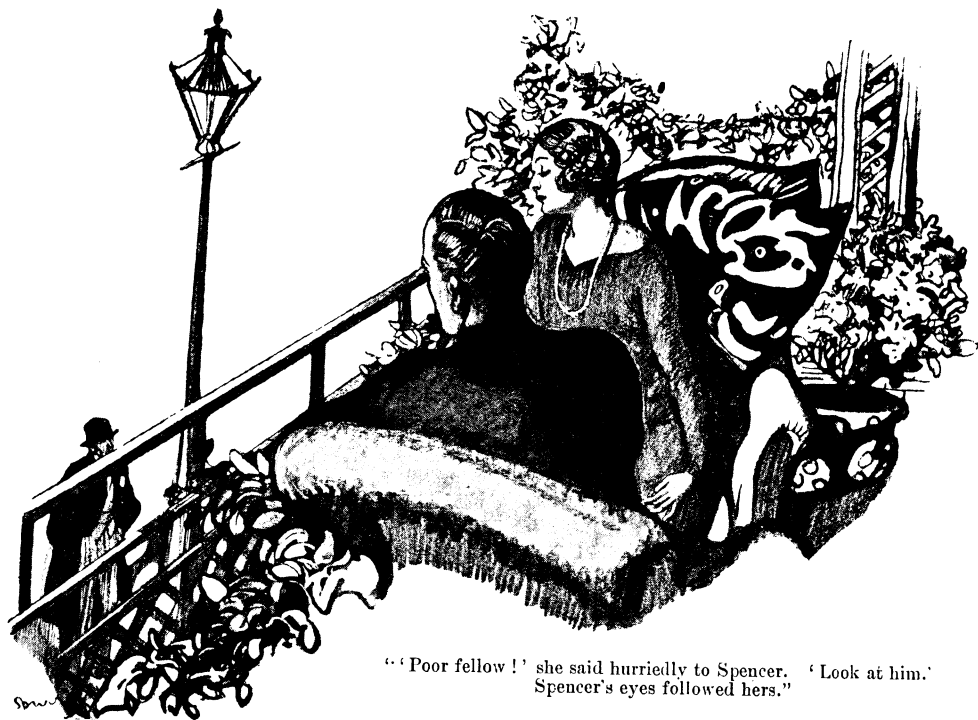
**I**N Grasmere at rush-bearing time,  
Like drowsy flame beneath hot skies,  
The still wave smoulders. Coaches climb  
From Grasmere vale the upland rise,  
And fervid Summer's at the prime.

Then soft as sleep the lately strong,  
Clear throb of beck and waterfall—  
Of Rothay crooning the day long  
In shallows by the churchyard wall,  
By Wordsworth's grave its cradle-song.

And noon is fierce on Loughrigg brow,  
And lines of reddening heather stain  
Helvellyn side, and bird and bough  
In scorching forest cry for rain,  
Upon the flank of Silver Howe.

ERIC CHILMAN.





“‘Poor fellow!’ she said hurriedly to Spencer. ‘Look at him.’  
Spencer’s eyes followed hers.”

# KINSMEN

By ETHEL M. RADBOURNE

ILLUSTRATED BY STEVEN SPURRIER

IN the heat of the mid-afternoon Prout Square had fallen to comparative quiet. An occasional footstep, a chance vehicle—these isolated sounds were italicised because of their rarity. The flowers on the balcony accentuated the stillness in Spencer’s fancy. Sitting there with Edith Dawson, he might have been in some embowered country arbour.

“Moods—have you noticed that places have them as well as people?” Edith asked. “You ought to understand that.”

“Why?” Spencer’s query was on the surface only. Beneath, he was telling himself that everything about Edith Dawson appealed to him. It was impossible for her to strike a jarring note. She was light beside which other women became shadow only.

“Who spoke of a human barometer?” Edith puzzled. “I can’t remember. But

certainly you’d respond to weather conditions.”

“Don’t hit me when I’m down,” Spencer laughed. “The heat, an armchair—and you. I’m in no state for defending myself. And why bring me in? You said that places had moods—this square, for instance.”

“To-day it’s like a sea-shell,” Edith smiled at her absurd simile. “Put your ear to it, and every sound’s accentuated. Footsteps. Listen to those just coming.”

They dragged a little, sounded aimless. Beneath the Dawsons’ house they came to a pause. Edith glanced between flowering plants and saw a man’s face staring upwards.

“Poor fellow!” she said hurriedly to Spencer. “Look at him.”

Spencer’s eyes followed hers. The man was clearly adrift in this part of the city. Narrow rubbish-littered courts would match



him. There was nothing alert left in his figure; he seemed to sag like a springless couch. His eyes were lacklustre—till they rested on Spencer's face. For a moment then it was as if a light flashed from darkness.

"He knows you?" Edith turned to Spencer. "See, he's making some movement of recognition."

"A mistake," Spencer declared. "I don't know him."

The man had stepped back on the pavement, tilting his head so that he could more easily see the balcony. From Spencer's face his eyes travelled to Edith Dawson's and back. Again, as he watched Spencer, he made that odd movement of recognition.

"You don't ask me to have another cup of tea." Spencer leant back in his chair as the man moved on. "I told you I was a thirsty guest."

"Apologies!" Edith turned to the tea-tray. "That man interested me. It was rather a fine face, and he looked at us so intently."

"Still moods," Spencer smiled. "The square—and now a beggar's face."

"A beggar?" Edith paused. "You think he was that?"

"That or pretty near it. Yes, I know him. I said I didn't in the conventional sense. He's the kind you'd be 'not at home' to. You know him as you know a dust-heap—it's there, and you wish it wasn't."

"He looked pitiable."

Spencer was watching Edith with appreciation. The mood of compassion became her. He was always divining fresh graces in her. She reminded him now of a white nun.

"That was Gerald Lockesly."

"Lockesly?" Edith searched her memory fruitlessly for a moment. Realisation came with a rush at the last.

"Gerald Lockesly. He's been—in prison?"

"Yes. Deserved it, too."

"Expiation." She found the word after a moment of wondering silence. "What will he do now?"

Spencer's shrug showed the future problematical.

"Closed doors." Her pause was as if she heard them clang. "He'll knock, and no one will answer. *Pitiable!*"

"But foreseen," Spencer urged. "He didn't take his leap in the dark. He chose with his eyes open."

"Yes, yes. But a pathetic figure. He

stood there almost as if he hoped we'd speak."

"Edith, you're adorable. A white nun—that's the phrase. Only not cloistered, thank Heaven."

This flower-embowered balcony and Edith Dawson—what on earth had Gerald Lockesly to do with so delectable an afternoon? He was negligible. He came—hesitated—passed on. One would as soon remember a drifting scrap of paper that the wind swept from the pavement. Yet later, as he came out into the square, Lockesly's story pushed itself obtrusively into Spencer's mind. Wild oats, and the reaping. A searing flame, and now grey embers of existence.

The man himself was standing at the corner of Grove Street, where Spencer lodged. Spencer realised that the meeting was inevitable. He was the one man whom Lockesly's thoughts would go to. David and Jonathan—the tag had followed them through school and college. Spencer hotly repudiated it now in his movement of aversion. Lockesly saw it, but persisted.

"It's no use, Spencer. You've simply got to give me half an hour. If you saw a man drowning, you'd fling him a rope? That's all I'm asking. Once I'm ashore I'll not trouble you."

Spencer led the way to his room in silence. The interview would be unpleasant—husk with the kernel gone. His thoughts of Lockesly now were stripped bare of friendship. He adhered, of course, to the outward seeming of hospitality—an easy-chair, cigarettes, an offer of refreshment. Distaste mounted to a white heat as he watched the man—shrunk, down at heels, averted eyes. And then suddenly Lockesly's eyes were no longer averted. They lifted to Spencer's, probing, asking questions.

"You're the only man who'd help me," he said.

"What kind of help?"

Lockesly rested one hand in the other, fingers straining as if he ground something to dust. Spencer's eyes followed that gesture. It was grotesque, almost as if the man clutched at himself for safety.

"You're the only one," he repeated. "The others don't know me."

"I didn't this afternoon," Spencer said.

"Your eyes did. You couldn't keep recognition out of them. David and Jonathan—you remember?" Lockesly saw sharp distaste in the other's face. "Sorry.



Shouldn't have said it. Those days are done with." He hesitated, seemed intensely to question. He looked with haggard eyes for some shadow of the old friendship. "Those days are gone?"

"Irrevocably." Spencer stressed the word. He said after a moment: "What help do you want?"

"I want to get out of it. Somewhere in the Back of Beyond. Some place where they won't *know*—if there is such a place on the earth!"

Spencer couldn't keep his eyes from this odd travesty of a familiar friend. The very lines and angles of his body were caricature. They were familiar, and incredibly unfamiliar. They were Yesterday and To-day in strange conjunction. What an utter fool the man had been! From the level of his own fastness of well-doing Spencer looked down on this weakling. David and Jonathan—the old tag sickened him. Surely memory was the deepest abasement Lockesly could suffer.

"Once I get out there," Lockesly was saying, "there may be a chance. Work of some kind." For the first time he gave the flicker of a smile. "I've come to that. Work's my lodestar. It's a drug. I can forget when I'm dead weary."

Spencer bent forward; his question came curtly. "Why did you fling your chances to the winds? *Why?*"

Lockesly's eyes grew suddenly intent. He seemed at the moment to be appraising Spencer as a man seen for the first time. His scrutiny lasted so long that Spencer repeated his question.

"*Why?* I could never understand it."

"You wouldn't." Lockesly ceased to study the other's face. "You're cast iron. There are no chinks."

"Imagery." Spencer brushed it aside.

"You can't understand a man being swept off his feet, hurled and hurtled like a drifting log when a dam's burst. You've always stood on dry land."

"Imagery again. You were always in the pictorial line. I remember——" Spencer pulled up abruptly. That was of the past. To-day held only an odd shadow of familiarity.

"I'll do what you ask," Spencer said curtly. "Give me details."

Lockesly gave them in a harsh voice, matching Spencer's. Barriers bristled between them. For one fugitive moment they might have fallen. That moment past, they were shoulder-high, invincible.

"Where are you staying?" Spencer asked.

Lockesly told him. A mean street—Spencer rapidly visualised it. What a frame! Yet Lockesly now matched it. Spencer watched him presently from the doorway, limping down the street. He was glad when a sharp turn hid him. It was with the sense of a dropped weight that he went back to his own room. He had a desire to throw the window wide and let in a rush of cleansing air. Sharp distaste took pity and strangled it in Spencer's breast. Lockesly had sown—let him reap. Fool, to have sown the wind!

*Edith!* Thoughts of her were tonic. It was like coming suddenly to open places. He felt braced to great endeavour. If he had Edith for wife, stumbling blocks would cease to exist. He would carve success as a sculptor his marble. He could have laughed aloud at thought of the gifts Life had up her sleeve for him. Just now she pelted him with success as with roses.

It was irritating to be brought down from these heights. His landlady's voice announcing "Mr. Picton to see you" made a jar of discord. Picton himself added to the discord. He was a man Spencer disliked.

"Am I a nuisance?" Picton inquired. "Sorry! I was passing, and thought I'd drop in."

Spencer wheeled a chair round and drew a thin veil of affability across his annoyance.

Picton waited till the landlady's steps had ceased to sound before he added:

"I'm just on my way home from the Dawsons'. Been spending a pleasant half-hour there."

Spencer was lighting a cigar. Over the flame of a match his eyes took in Picton's loose-limbed figure, florid face, eyes set too nearly together. There was something repellent about the set of Picton's head. He was animal, heavily moulded.

"Nice house, the Dawsons'. One endures old Dawson. No rose without a thorn. The rose itself—my word, but it's fragrant!"

Spencer's scrutiny was intent. He had always disliked Picton. Business had thrown them into occasional contact. He was a distant connection of the Dawsons'—one they endured with sighs. In their house he showed as a weed in a well-kept garden.

Picton leant back in his chair and puffed in leisurely fashion at his pipe. The heavy lines of his face seemed suddenly to crumple,



to become plastic. Laughter set his shoulders to odd gestures.

"Had a rousing interview this evening. But it's well ended. Thought I'd better look in and tell you the news."

"News?"

"I'm to marry Edith one of these days."

"You're to——" Spencer was hoarse suddenly, dumb. He stared at Picton's face through a haze of smoke. The wavering cloud seemed to set that other face to odd expression—say like the malevolent grin of a gargoyle on a church eave. Spencer waved the smoke aside. Picton's small close-set eyes were watching him.

"Surprised? Had no notion of it? Ah, well, I thought I'd let you know."

Spencer's thoughts were like horses out of hand. They galloped. They left him breathless. He was whirled along at breakneck speed. And all the time Picton lounged in the armchair opposite. His loose-limbed figure had an odd look of repose as if he had come to anchor.

Picton lowered his voice. "I'm not finicking, thin-skinned. If you want to fling a boot at my head, do it."

This was direct—with intention. Spencer was instantly at the core of the other's thought. Picton divined that Spencer would think his news had an air of incredibility. To Spencer Edith had been gracious, yielding. . . . Hope must have sat contentedly on his shoulder. He would bask in assurance. Now this bombshell, this shattering certainty of another man's success.

Picton tossed his cigar away and bent forward. "I'll be frank. As I said, there's nothing finicking about me. You're surprised? You *wonder*?"

Spencer smoked in silence. The other man's voice jarred. A swift instinct of silence kept him from speech. Let Picton talk. Sooner or later he'd show his colours. He'd lift a latch and through the opened door something sinister would emerge.

Picton held his hands out, large and supple, and suggestive of cruelty. The fingers closed, locked. The imagery was instant. His words elaborated, gave detail.

"Dawson senior's a poor man at business. He's got things snarled. Listen." He pushed a dozen items before Spencer's mental vision. "Those are samples only. Things have been going from bad to worse. Financially he's down and out—but for me."

The last three words illumined, dazzled.

The case in a nutshell. Financial safety for Edith's father if Edith would be hostage.

Spencer found himself laughing suddenly. "You fool," he said aloud.

"Fool? Not much. I win."

"Have you ever studied human nature?" Spencer suggested. "Not yours—or mine. The kind that exists on a different plane. People like the Dawsons can't be bought. They don't think in terms of cash. You're in the dark—groping."

Picton got to his feet, moving leisurely, with a swagger of assurance. Loose-limbed, heavy-featured, thick lips—it was inconceivable that for a single moment Edith——

"I win," Picton laughed.

Something in Picton's face, confident, half leering, stung Spencer to white heat. Picton's body seemed to swell gigantically before his eyes. On the wings of his rage he mounted to action, swift, overmastering. He sent Picton suddenly sprawling so that he fell with a thud against the fireplace.

The man lay astonishingly still. He was a mere mass of sagging limbs. Flesh with no spirit. The face was half turned, showing the profile. The mouth sagged open, foolish and awry. The thud of his head against the iron fender had been prelude to this stillness. As if from the heart of turmoil peace rose triumphant.

Spencer stared down at him. Presently he stooped, touched him. No response. A mass of inert flesh and a foolish sagging mouth. Spencer could not keep his eyes away from the opened lips. A few minutes ago they had moved, assumed the shape of letters, contrived sentences. They had twisted into sneers, smiles, laughter.

A clock struck on the mantelpiece. It was nearly time for his landlady to bring his coffee. She would look with amazement at the odd figure on the hearthrug. . . . The bed in Spencer's room was a more fitting place for the man till he recovered consciousness. A dead weight—Spencer's breath quickened as he raised it. A good thing the bedroom opened out of the sitting-room . . . it was not far. . . . Spencer was back in the sitting-room when the landlady came with the coffee.

"The gentleman went? I thought I heard someone go out of the front door. Down in the basement I don't hear well. You'll want nothing more to-night?"

"Nothing, thank you."

He heard her footsteps grow silent before he moved across to the dividing door. No change. Nothing of mockery now behind



those closed lids. No irony in the twist of the mouth. The man had been triumphant. "I win," he had said laughingly. And all the time he had stood on the brink of disaster. He had danced on the edge of a precipice.

Spencer moved away from the still figure. Back in the sitting-room, he forced himself to drink the coffee. It would look odd if the cup remained untouched. . . . Mrs. Coates would wonder. He must move carefully; caution must sit on his shoulder.

*Why?*

The question seemed to come from every corner of the room. He was ensnared, caught in a mesh of his own making. And for what? For the merest shadow of phantasy. Picton might as well have thought to climb to the moon as win Edith Dawson. Secure, in a cockle-shell boat of his own building—that was Picton. He had expressed willingness to help Dawson senior out of a financial crisis—at a price. That the price should be refused never entered his head. His judgments were entirely of the pocket.

Spencer took a rapid turn across the room, then back to the fireplace. Why, only this afternoon Edith had shown the core of her thought! "Loss of money seems a mere pinprick. Father and I are the sort who could be happy in a log cabin." And she had quoted, half laughing: "Happiness is a free gait. Circumstance a crutch only."

Spencer drew nearer to the heart of certainty. He should win her. Already she swayed towards him. Invincible cords drew them each to the other. Picton? He didn't count. He never had counted. Spencer, now, could have laughed at his own anger, dismay. Edith Dawson could no more be bought with Picton's gold than

the sun would drop to earth at his bidding. Then why——

Spencer felt momentarily breathless. Realisation had him in stranglehold. He re-lived the instant when he struck Picton.



"Spencer stood so near the low window that he could reach for the other's hand and grip it."

He had seen red. There had been nothing in him but blind rage and a desire to gratify it. The sowing. What of the reaping?

Spencer turned his head towards a chair



at the far end of the room. Not long ago Lockesly had sat there. He could see him now, shabby, out at elbows. Even his voice held only a piping travesty of its old note. David and Jonathan—familiar tag. Contempt had made Spencer feel sick at the sight of this one-time Jonathan. A man who had fooled away his chances by yielding to a sudden onslaught of temptation.

Lockesly's voice echoed. . . . "You can't understand a man being swept off his feet, hurtled like a drifting log when a dam bursts.

*"You've always stood on dry land."*

He tiptoed across to the bedroom. Perhaps by this time—Not so much as the flicker of an eyelid. Picton's body. The coarse vehicle of his spirit. But Picton himself?

He crossed to the window and stared down into the street. There had been footsteps. Had they halted, paused under the window? He thought he saw a shadow flung lengthways on the pavement. It moved stealthily—perhaps listened. It was a moment before he realised that he saw nothing more than the shadow of a laurel shrub moving in the wind. There was no one watching. . . . but soon there might be. Not for long could he hide behind four walls. They would crumble, disappear. He seemed to see them vanish now, and a crowd of faces staring at the still figure on the bed. He had sown the wind. There must be the whirlwind for reaping.

There was a sound, faint, indecisive. Spencer at first hardly noticed. The sound repeated, he turned his head sharply to the bed, moved presently towards it. He bent, peering. He saw the eyelids quiver, open. A tremor of consciousness ran through the sagging limbs. It was as if Picton's spirit crept back reluctantly to this cage of the flesh.

Spencer moved automatically. Brandy . . . he held it steadily to Picton's lips, supporting him against his arm. In silence Spencer served. Picton accepted. Consciousness more fully returned, there were a few terse sentences.

"What happened?"

"You fell with your head against the iron fender."

"Stunned. I see. How. . . . Ah, yes, I remember." And then that incredible laugh of Picton's. "I told you to fling a boot at my head if you liked. . . . Help me up. Steady! That's better. Call a

taxi. They'll take the order at Twelford's. They're used to my hours," Picton chuckled.

Spencer served automatically. He was saved. That onslaught of passion had swept by, leaving no traces. He was delivered from bondage. He would not pay—like Lockesly. This body that was Picton breathed, talked, made plans, jested. He could even lean finally from the taxi window and fling a gibe at Spencer's ear.

"The boot might have done the trick."

*Safe!* Spencer moved to the rhythm of the word. There would be no whirlwind for reaping—as in Lockesly's case. *Lockesly!* The dumb entreaty of the man's eyes had left him cold. He sat smug and self-satisfied behind barriers. "*You can't understand,*" Lockesly had said.

Spencer took his hat and stepped into the street. The early morning was sunlit. Even these city streets held a brief glamour. Passing presently under the Dawsons' windows, he halted for a moment. Fool to have been swayed for a moment by Picton's assumption! The Dawsons were not to be bought by banking accounts. They didn't barter sun and stars for a farthing dip.

Sunshine lent no charm to the mean streets of the city. Coming to them, Spencer's thoughts went inevitably to the past, to the kind of place Lockesly had been reared in. There had been a time when he was fastidious, ultra-sensitive to his surroundings. This morning Lockesly's face stared at him from the window of a tumbledown shanty in a mean street.

Lockesly threw the window wide and leant out. "Yes? What is it?"

Spencer stood so near the low window that he could reach for the other's hand and grip it.

"I've come to talk things over. We'll make plans for the future. We used to. You remember those old David and Jonathan days?"

Lockesly stared in amazement. Spencer threw him some staccato sentences.

"*I understand.* Swept off one's feet . . . a burst dam. Hustled, hurtled. . . . I tell you *I understand,* Lockesly."

Lockesly's amazement kept him still silent. But Spencer's handclasp warmed, invigorated. It was as if he built a fire in an ice house. Lockesly drew near to it, absorbing the warmth.

To Spencer this man was no longer pariah. He was kinsman, brother,



# A LUCIFER MATCH

By MICHAEL KENT

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

**F**ERVOUR seems to have gone—the generous uprising of warm impulse fearless of consequence. It belonged to an age when industry could be sure of reward, when it was safer to work than to gamble, and beef was tenpence a pound. Nowadays one grips one's own float in the waters and edges off the swimmer. "I'm sorry, brother, but this only just keeps *me* above water."

Janet Cooper occasions the reflection because she was a survival. With all a Victorian's convention she had all the true Victorian's hearty, human fire that could scrap convention when the need came. Had she not, as a mere girl, taken Betty Austin as a housemaid into Petty Chequers when everyone else in Bishopstone precincts had seen, with half-averted eyes, the girl cast out from the Deanery?

"Theft is not to be condoned even if it was only a postal order," admitted the precincts. "It would not be proper."

Janet, on the other hand, quoted Longfellow, whom she revered:

"Saint Augustine, well hast thou said  
That of our vices we can frame  
A ladder, if we will but tread  
Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

So she held the ladder for Betty.

Janet in those days was eighteen, a very slim and slender girl, whose expression seemed always to denote eagerness. It was in her eyes and lips and quick hands and the play of colour in her pink-and-white cheeks.

Her father had lived at Petty Chequers within the Cathedral precincts for twenty-five years of busy life as master of the King's School. When he died she was little more than twenty-three. She still remained in the old house which stood, cloaked in wistaria, at the corner of Long Green, whence one could look forth under the writhen

acacias to the grey arcades of the Norman transept.

But John Cooper's passing had made a great difference. No longer, as his staid young chatelaine, would she preside at teas for sixth-form boys, while the old man, still at his cunning plaster work, stiffened slack sinews or raised a sunk head in the human clay he fashioned. Now the house ran itself. The savour and purpose had gone out of life. There seemed to be nothing to do.

That made for ill-health—a vague egotism ultimately shrinking from trouble, fatigue, and pain. Masterman, called in, would prescribe innocuous tonics, advocate change and an interest. What he could not know was that deep in Janet's heart, checked by her altered life, was a volcanic activity, the desire to be an influence, and, departing, to leave behind her "footprints on the sands of Time."

Chance revealed it to her, Chance and the Man in the Chair. She found him among the advertisements in an American magazine which the doctor had brought her, a prosperous gentleman with a cheery smile, a Napoleonic front, and a foreshortened index finger threatening her eyes. That forefinger's imperative message was indicated by a caption which ran: "Did *You* Climb Higher Last Week?"

Plainly Janet had not. She had not climbed out of her bed. Equally plainly the confident gentleman who was mainly concerned with the stepping-stones to success could appeal but little to a delicate and purposeless girl dwelling aloof under the shadow of Bishopstone's Bell Tom.

But the blatant advertisement served a curious purpose. It exposed that latent desire to influence, to use all those delicate hidden arts of psychology which she had seen in her father's work, to justify living.

"Impossible," thought Janet; "my health



won't stand it. And they want graduates in girls' schools nowadays." She considered medicine as an alternative, dallied with the idea of nursing, and then, from the consideration that her experience had been more in the mental than the bodily field, came the great idea.

"Can't I advise, encourage, and inspire? Can't I be the Man in the Chair?"

She rang her bell. "Elizabeth," said she to the maid, "I'm going to get up."

She sat eagerly forward away from her pillows, who had not been wont to desert their support, greatly alive. Her eyes, which had lacked lustre, shone once more. She was younger.

Betty doubted. "But you ain't strong enough, miss."

"I'm going to see," said Janet.

Betty, who had, thanks to her mistress, trodden a good deal beneath her feet, ran to hold her. The girl waved her off. "I am all right by myself. Put my writing desk out downstairs and bring my hot water."

The sympathetic reader will mark the precedence of those orders. Janet did not mean to write letters before she was dressed.

The great impulse had obsessed her. She knew as much as most people of psychology and suggestion. It was a great career. In her mind she pictured her forlorn, shipwrecked brethren taking heart again from her message.

The scheme lent itself as much to her innate seclusiveness as to her warm desire to bear a hand in the big world's work. She could stay remote in untroubled anonymity, a hidden strength mighty to aid, a voice compelling, but beyond that—nothing.

"Miss," threatened Betty, hovering to help as the girl essayed the stairs, "you best take care. Soon's I've seen you safely down, I'll fetch a shawl."

Janet boldly let the banister go. "We've taken too much care," she said. "Both of us. Run away, Betty. I'll come down alone."

One cannot preach "Excelsior" to others and take too much thought for "the pine tree's withered branch" and the rest of the unpleasant incidentals oneself.

The Man in the Chair had done Janet no end of good. On consideration that is quaint, for these suggestion advertising stunts are more than half charlatan, while your modern highbrow smiles at Longfellow, and here were they impelling as lonely and fragile a girl as ever sank sweetly into a

mid-Victorian decline to stiffen the sinews of mankind and light the down-hearted to success. If the saints in their abode watch human souls, they must have smiled on Janet.

An advertisement was a matter of course, and Janet's first "lay-out" was the most fantastic thing in the world.

### SUCCESS!!

(Will the printer put this into very large type?)

ALL CAN WIN IF THEY TRY.

(Not quite so large, please.)

Honest, unremitting effort, intelligently directed and courageously sustained, cannot fail. But perhaps, dear reader, you do not know how to direct it. Perhaps you feel that there is no place for you. *Nil desperandum!* For fifteen shillings I will send you my course. Apply in all confidence and absolute secrecy to Lucifer, The Bearer of the Torch, office of this paper.

N.B. Every student of the course comes under the personal supervision of Lucifer.

(Will the printer please put a chaste border round the announcement, and oblige?)

P.S. The words in brackets are not to be printed.

The printer set up "Success" in ecclesiastical black letter, and the only border he had at hand was one of jockeys racing, generally reserved for announcements of sporting events.

Janet flushed with shame when, on getting her voucher copy, she remembered that Lucifer stood also for a more sinister personality than the light bearer. Anonymity was a comforting consideration, and she waited for the tide of inquiries to roll in.

It was a lazy tide, long in the making, but that did not matter. She looked for no profit. The scheme was launched. It would surely float.

After three weeks Janet was not so sure. No one in all East Brant wanted success in a course of twelve lessons for fifteen shillings. It was deplorable. Yet while she had been perfecting those lessons she had learnt a good deal of them herself, too much to give up easily.

She got a reply after the fourth week.

"—Lucifer, Esq. Dear Sir."

That thrilled her. It was a tribute to the masterful virility which her advertisement suggested. It made Janet feel like the Man in the Chair, confident and magnetic.



"Your advertisement attracted me because I think you would have to go a long way to find another case so needing your help. To be quite plain, I am a failure—that is, at the end of a year's honest striving and earnest effort. Such ignominy is peculiarly desolating for the reasons following. When I came down from Camford I chose rather to follow the inspiration of an ideal than to accept a parent's offer of a chair in an office peddling so mundane a commodity as pig-iron. I pledged my whole competence to achieve success, and now contemplate only hunger before me, or failure confessed and the servitude of the office. It would haunt me all my life. I am come to a pass where

mental action. When old John Cooper died, people had not begun to chatter greatly about buried complexes and the sub-conscious, but in his time he could talk to a boy for ten minutes and discover "That kid's got a bogey. Half of him is watching lest the other half lets it out." Sooner or later he'd lay that bogey. It might be nothing more than that the lad was afraid of cows, or that a mother's fancy in his dress had made him shrink from ridicule. It might be deeper, but John Cooper would catch the bogey, that fluttered like a moth



"Chance revealed it to her, Chance and the Man in the Chair. She found him among the advertisements in an American magazine which the doctor had brought her."

the expenditure of fifteen shillings is a matter of moment. I have gambled twice in my life—once with my brains—and I have lost, and this time with what is a week's board. So far am I reduced. Shall I lose again? Probably. Yours desperately,  
"A. GILLESPIE."

The woes of A. Gillespie were the cheer-fullest thing to Janet. Here was something to be done.

Remember this most curious paradox. She had been trained under an expert in

at the light of the boy's soul, for the victim to see how small a thing had cast such fearsome shadows in his path. Add to her knowledge of her father's practice the fact that Janet had read widely, and it is plain that she was quite able to take hold of her contract.

It is not unnatural that the first lesson of her course should have been headed with the challenge:

"Lay Your Bogies!"

There was a page of pointed stuff to the question "What do you fear?"—the sort



of thing that most of frail humanity, unwilling to face, calls trite and commonplace, and not intellectual enough for serious consideration. The smugness of Victorian probity does not come anywhere near our Neo-Georgian smugness of intellectuality.

The first lesson of Janet's course, too, included a special questionnaire, and A. Gillespie's answers would prove a shrewd test of his honesty.

Two replies on the list stood out revealing.

"What do you seek?" "Fame."

"What do you fear?" "Scorn."

That fixed A. Gillespie.

Janet wrote back for the second lesson:

"You are afraid of your father, A. G. Go to him and tell him that though you have failed so far, you mean to succeed. He cannot scorn that. He cannot even sneer at your failure if you admit it. His sneer can only avail if you don't. This new lesson is headed 'Think Straight.' It is most important to you, for your letters show that your thought is often interrupted for the mere pleasure of turning a phrase on fine-sounding words. You think too much of A. Gillespie and his cleverness. He looks over your shoulder at times to say 'That sounds smart!' It would be better for him to say 'That is brief and true.'"

She did not get his application for the third lesson for more than a month, and judged that possibly her tonic had proved a little too bitter for her patient's palate. Anyhow, in that time a good deal had occurred both to A. Gillespie and his tutor.

Longstaffe died.

Of Longstaffe perhaps the less said the better. He was Furley, Furley, Longstaffe and Minifie, solicitors. As trustee for Janet he had paid her yearly income from funds which were to be thus administered till she married. So, without trouble, for years the income had been paid to her. Then Longstaffe's death revealed the fact that the capital had gone. The impeccable solicitor was hollow as a bamboo, and crooked at that. He had used Janet's livelihood to hunt wild cats in Throgmorton Street. The regular return of interest had covered a crime which left Janet almost without resources.

So passed Petty Chequers and the quiet precincts life. The wolf, the inexorable wolf of want, waited Janet's going forth. There was left, that is to say, only the small proceeds of furniture sold in a hurry to stave him off.

Cook left with tears.

Betty was exhorted to find a new situation.

"What do you take me for, miss?" asked Betty brusquely.

"It isn't a case of taking," returned Janet. "I have no money. I must find some cheap lodgings and look for work."

"And if you find it," inquired Betty belligerently, "when you come 'ome at the end of the day, what'll you do without me to look after you?"

Janet was a little impatient. "You don't understand," she said. "I can't pay your wages."

Betty scowled. "Ho!" said she. "Who said wages? Reckon I can earn my keep with charin'."

The old proverb about homing birds is unduly boding. They are not all crows. There was, for instance, Elizabeth Austin.

So Janet, taking what comfort she might from that, entered small lodgings up against St. Dunstan's Church, with a polyhedral cell under the tiles, where Betty had a bed which, after many days, she learned to get into without collision with any of the roofs or walls. She took to charring, which was plentiful. And if, as she argued, after she'd done her job she'd liever call downstairs and look after missie than lay her hands on her lap, couldn't she suit herself? "There isn't much joy," said she cunningly, "that a pore maid gets, an' it don't behove missie to be selfish."

Thus a month passed, with A. Gillespie all but forgotten. Then his answer to lesson two arrived some three weeks overdue.

A. Gillespie had been raised. His letter indicated that in his chosen work he had received a small success. "Enough," he wrote, "to arm the fight for six weeks more." That was directly attributable to Lucifer's guidance. The conditions were ironical, for Lucifer seemed in no case to light her own path to success. But the lessons were all prepared. She still retained her typewriter. It would be a shame to desert her one and only pupil now.

She sent him the third lesson. "Take Stock!"

It was a penetrating effort. "He who sells anything, sells mainly himself, either his knowledge of where, and how, and what to provide in the way of goods, or his craft or his skill or his art. A merchant takes stock of his goods from time to time. Does he, or any other worker, take stock of that self which is his chief asset? Not too often. Examine what you have to offer of strength, craftsmanship,



talent, address, knowledge, spirit. Weigh them by your experience. What has proved good? What bad? What finds a ready market? What is a drug? Retain the useful. Scrap the dross."

The quaint part of the business was that, trying her own prescription, Janet could find nothing but the typewriter as her own asset. Possibly she ought to have scrapped her modest opinion of herself.

However, acting thus according to her lights, she inserted a fresh advertisement in *The Paston Gazette*.

"Typewriting, prompt and careful work guaranteed, translations, Latin, French, German. Rates moderate. J. C., 74, St. Dunstan's, Bishopstone."

But neither Bishopstone nor Paston had much use for typewriting. Her few and small commissions never paid her expenses. The little balance shrank perilously. The dice were loaded against her.

In those days cracks appeared in the keystone of her philosophy, which was that honest, unremitting effort, intelligently directed and courageously sustained, cannot fail. Arches crash when keystones crumble.

On the very eve of disruption came a letter from her pupil.

"DEAR MR. LUCIFER.—I write this quite extra to the routine of the Course, to tell you that your advice has been of such use to me that I can view the future in my chosen career with confidence. You made me do some hard things, particularly in scrapping the dross. I scrapped it with tears; only to find that its presence had been paralysing. Old fixed ideas went with it, but my old technique remained and a new outlook came. My resultant work surprised me. Its success was immediate. Words will not tell what I owe you. May I have the privilege of seeing you, so as to be able the more emphatically to lay my tribute to your wisdom at your feet? I await the rest of the Course with eagerness.—Yours very gratefully,  
A. GILLESPIE."

There was a triumph to warm the heart!

But triumph does not always pay bills or feed the hungry.

Janet wrote back Lucifer's appreciation. His anonymity, however, could not be disturbed. There were psychological reasons for it. One is more powerfully impressed by the unknown. A. Gillespie would have to remain content with that.

There were more than psychological reasons, as the reader may guess, with

Janet lying to keep from Betty how she economised on her food in the middle of the day, while her unfed strength waned, and Herr Pfeiffer, his bacillus, with a group of merry friends, called to announce that they were looking for temporary quarters.

It was just when Janet was resuming work after her attack of influenza, with the resultant depression which follows from entertaining such undesirable guests, magnifying all her bogies, that her landlady admitted "A gentleman to see you, miss."

A wild jet of hope indicated A. Gillespie, overbearing her wishes, coming to tender thanks in person. A second's thought proved that vain. Gillespie only knew Lucifer, the Bearer of the Torch, whom he addressed at the newspaper office. This visit must concern typewriting.

It did. A pleasant, tall young man, whose head continually quarrelled with the low-beamed ceiling, entered.

"You undertake typewriting," he said. "I saw your advertisement in *The Paston Gazette*. I wonder if you deal with author's manuscript?"

"Gladly," said she. "I shall be only too pleased."

"Good." He nodded. "Confound the beam! May I sit down? I think it would be safer!"

He busied himself with a leather portfolio while his eyes surveyed the room. The typewriter was on the table, but not uncovered. Beside it on a tray was Janet's lunch—a loaf, some butter, and a chunk of one of those confections which provision shops sell readily because they seem meatier than they are.

"I've here," said he, "a good deal of work. Would it upset your established practice if I were to ask for it to be done quickly?"

"Not a bit," she returned. "I have no es—I'm not very busy just now."

"You have no established practice," said the young man thoughtfully. "I'm sorry. I hoped that you did a good deal of typing for—er—people in the neighbourhood. Gives confidence, you know."

He swayed in his hand a bulky block of written pages. "I'm Patrick Wynne," he said, and, putting the manuscript upon the table, turned to her boyishly. "Writer. You may have seen my work in *The Cosmopolitan*. There are no end of directions that I want to give about this stuff." He stood up and said something peevish to the ceiling in consequence. "I wonder if you



would do me the kindness of lunching with me in the town?"

"I've had lunch," she returned.  
"I——"

He cut the excuse. "But I can't eat while you listen to my fads. It's absurd. I shall be very busy this afternoon, too. Please!"

Janet yielded.

It was a lunch of the old days, not a business of makeshifts and fractional calculations for the morrow's needs. But Patrick Wynne said not one word about typewriting. Instead, when he had finished he turned rather abruptly to her. "You are not doing very well, Miss Cooper," he announced.

Janet shook her head.

"No," he agreed. "Yet you should."



"If you have an object in view, Pat," she said solemnly."



You've so much—forgive my being personal—so much that the ordinary typist is not equipped with. You ought to make it go. What's haunting you?"

"Haunting?" she gasped. The question was an echo.

"Perhaps you think it is ill-luck," he said. "But I think it is because you don't trust yourself." Suddenly he

jerked his chair a little so as not to face her. "Forgive me. I am impertinent. I'll say no more. About that work—a fifteen space margin, set pars in another five. Don't hyphen words on the right-hand margin if you can avoid it. Give me double spacing, and don't run too far down the page. One carbon. I prefer black, and purple for the top copy. Do you think that you can manage it?"

"I'm quite certain," said Janet, which was not the reply she would have made before Pat had been impertinent.

"Splendid!" he said. "If you'll let me, I'll call to-morrow morning to see how you've got on?"

"I shall be glad," she said with enthusiasm. It was not only that here was the biggest commission she had received, but the young man's vitality was contagious.

She went home confident.

And the particular humour of her attitude of mind lies in the fact that she was laying the bogies, taking stock and scrapping the dross, even as Lucifer the Torch Bearer had advised A. Gillespie, and she wouldn't have done it if it hadn't been for Pat Wynne.

Even her dingy little room had changed its aspect. It had been a foothold that would serve till the rising wave engulfed her. Now it was good enough to stay in till her needs rendered better quarters



"It was you, Janet, sweetheart. Only you. You made Patrick Wynne. May I make you Wynne, too?"



imperative. She sought out a card that shame had buried, and placed it in the window—

#### TYPEWRITING.

Careful and prompt.

She wanted typewriting. This was a natural way to get it. Why hesitate?

When Pat Wynne arrived the next morning she welcomed him with a clatter of keys.

"How's it going, Miss Cooper?" he asked.

"I'm on page twenty-seven of the written work," she said.

"Splendid!" he cried. "It's close on nine thousand words." He took up a sheet. "That's jolly well set out. Corrections?" He scrutinised the sheet minutely. "Your T key has gone wonky, Miss Cooper."

A couple of places which he indicated showed a T neatly inserted in purple ink.

"I'm so sorry," she explained; "it's the carriage. When T follows an apostrophe in words like 'can't' or 'won't,' the carriage raised to print the apostrophe doesn't drop quickly enough for the lower case letter to hit. I'll try—"

He laughed. "It's of no importance, really. You correct so neatly. Only I always inquire into causes. It's the advice of a friend—the wisest man I know." He walked to the little window and looked out over the geraniums. "Do you do much work for other people in the neighbourhood?"

"Hardly any," she confessed, "beyond a few sermons for a local clergyman. Bishopstone doesn't need me."

"Go to another market," he suggested drily, "or offer other goods. Perhaps there is too much competition?"

"None," she admitted ruefully; "I—I was just trying to start."

Then in a moment he realised, from the tired droop of her shoulders, how fair she was and how fragile, and, being himself of a temperament easily stung, he understood how much her culture and delicacy must be crushed by her circumstances. It made him angry.

"You poor child," he cried impulsively, "you work too hard! Don't hurry my job. Make it last. I shall be glad to pay a higher rate for a script so careful as yours. Don't worry."

The unlooked-for kindness brimmed Janet's eyes. He went on quickly: "What do you think of that yarn? Care for it, Miss Cooper? Honest, now!"

An effective decoy. The critical faculty was very quick in her. "Honest, I do," she returned. "It's human and true." She paused. "May I say one thing?"

He nodded vigorously, then sat down and rubbed his offended head.

"Here and there you wander into periphrase, as if your desire to be smart broke through the need to be true. All good stories are true in a sense, aren't they?"

He grinned grimly. "Just what he says," he murmured, "my great friend and master. Do you mind showing me?"

With a mixture of decision and timidity she found him places where a clever jingling phrase marred the stark conviction of his page.

"You're right," he said, and with a firm hand cut the passage. It brought them to a very pleasant communion at the end. "I'm enormously grateful for your help, Miss Cooper."

"You make me very proud," she said.

"And your fee?"

She deprecated it. "Mayn't I be a friend to someone who has been so good to me?"

She was glad that he allowed her the privilege of giving. "Then you have my warmest thanks," he said, "and I hope we're going to be much better friends than this."

It was with a singing heart that she sent off A. Gillespie's fifth lesson. "Don't be Satisfied." Poor and lonely and barely able to win her living as she was, she still could leave behind her "footprints on the sands of Time."

So she borrowed strength from the young man's cheery confidence, looking forward to those half-hours when she could talk with admiration of his work, its sincerity, its unpretending foundation on the dear and common springs of human life. Till out of that Pat grew very dear and wonderful to her. At last there came a day when he came in frowning, and only when she found how sad his frown could make her, might she know how much his fellowship had warmed her heart.

"Miss Cooper," he said brusquely, "I don't think you've been very frank with me." It had been "Miss Janet" the day before. "How," she asked, "not frank?"

"Well," he returned, "you happen to be working for someone whom I know, and you never told me. How you've managed to do my work as well as his, I can't imagine."



"But I haven't," protested the girl. "Yours is the only work I have had for six weeks. There must be some mistake."

For reply he struck half a dozen capital Gs and as many apostrophe Ts upon her typewriter, and took the sheet from the carrier. He spread a paper which he had taken from his pocket upon the table, with the newly-typed sheet beside it.

"The G upon your machine is defective," he said, "the T sometimes fails to mark. Both these faults are in this communication from my friend and master."

Janet looked down at the sheet. It was A. Gillespie's lesson five headed "Don't be Satisfied." Then she raised startled, puzzled eyes to Pat's.

"You did type that, didn't you?" he accused. "You do work for Mr. Lucifer?"

The girl was silent for a moment, trying to realise the extraordinary revelation. She was trembling a little and a quick colour suffused her cheeks.

Pat read this as signals of distress. "Oh, I'm a thoughtless brute!" he said. "Don't think any more about it. I quite understand. Mr. Lucifer has bound you to secrecy about his work. I'd no right to butt in, but I have so wanted to get into touch with him, and when I found that you had typed the lessons, I thought there might be a chance."

"I did type the lessons," said Janet. "You see, I am Mr. Lucifer."

Anyone less like the Prince of Evil Pride it would be difficult to imagine.

"You!" cried Pat, starting up. "Lucifer! Well, I'm—there's that beam again!"

"Did Mr. Gillespie send you on the lessons?" queried Janet.

"I am Gillespie," he explained—"at least, I was, but I killed him, or, rather, you killed him. He was a futile sort of person. Had an idea he was going to be a poet. Full of preciosity and silly highbrowism. He scrapped it all when he sat up one night to burn his manuscripts and turn to honest prose. That night Pat Wynne was born—at least, he was christened, and Mr. Lucifer was his godfather."

"But Lucifer is dead," she returned a little ruefully. "He'll have no more influence again. That was why I wouldn't let you meet me."

"My dearest heart," he cried, "you've been my guide!"

"No, no," she protested; "you came to me when life was very black."

"And who sent me?" he challenged, and threw himself impetuously on his knees beside her. "It was you, Janet, sweetheart. Only you. You made Patrick Wynne." A whimsical smile flickered for a moment on his face. "May I make you Wynne, too?"

For a moment she hesitated, and then recalled the keystone of her philosophy. "If you have an object in view, Pat," she said solemnly, "honest, unremitting effort, intelligently directed and courageously sustained, cannot fail to attain it!"

Pat attained it immediately.

Truly the saints had smiled on Janet.

## FAITHFULNESS.

**I** F all my days henceforth  
 Were destitute of thee,  
 Fate having weighed thy worth  
 And grudged its worth to me,  
 I still should hold as glory in despair  
 The memory of thy hand upon my hair.

If somewhere, near or far,  
 I wandered out of ken,  
 Where distant spaces are,  
 Or in the ways of men,  
 What should I know of love's afflicting drouth,  
 Bearing thy lingering kiss upon my mouth?

DOROTHY ROGERS.



# RANA

## THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A FROG

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

*Illustrated by the Author*

THE birthplace of a hero must always make some claim upon us, therefore we need offer no apology for drawing the reader's attention to a certain village horse-pond as it lay shimmering beneath the midday sun one mellow afternoon in March. Seen from the point of view of a man's eye, the horse-pond was scarcely a feast either of form or colour. Being fed by a sluggish stream which entered at one side and passed out at the other, the water was tolerably clear, but stray newspapers, a dead cat, and a thick film of dirt did much to counteract the beauty of the rush and burr-reed spikes piercing the fast-greening surface. Could the onlooker have reduced his stature till he stood some three inches high, have further enjoyed the privilege of breathing under water, and, thus equipped, stood upon the floor of the pond, it would have presented a considerably more interesting, not to say impressive, spectacle. For the pond was, in actuality, a world. Its muddy bed was a miniature plain, relieved by hills and dales, virgin forests of upright luscious growth, and jungly thickets of rank vegetation that had sprouted and rotted with the changing seasons for a hundred years or more. It was a world teeming with life, a world wherein plant, worm, mollusc, insect and fish strove together, year in, year out, at once unconsciously assisting and wilfully retarding each other with a fierce fixity of purpose only to be eclipsed by the teeming populace of the sea.

Great horse-mussels ploughed their way through the mud, cleaving pathways through colonies of waving pond worms, each worm ensconced for half his length in a little tube of clay. Snails—a dozen kinds at least—glided over the ooze, crawled up the miniature tree-stems of the water-weeds or floated idly on the surface. The loathly

grubs of at least fifty kinds of flies scrambled like monkeys in the tangled vegetation, and beetles and water-scatters beyond numbering rowed themselves like goblin pleasure skiffs along the narrow alleyways of the Liliputian forests. Sticklebacks and roach preyed upon the grubs of beetles, the perfect beetles presently to take their toll of the young sticklebacks and roach when in due season they appeared. The bitterling carp prospected for a likely mussel wherein to lay her eggs, and the mussel in his turn forged heavily onwards, smashing down the homes of the mud worms and the shell-built houses of caddis fly larvæ. Leeches sucked the snails from their shells, and the empty shells drifted down to be added to the caddis grubs' tenements. And so the game went on—an ordered chaos.

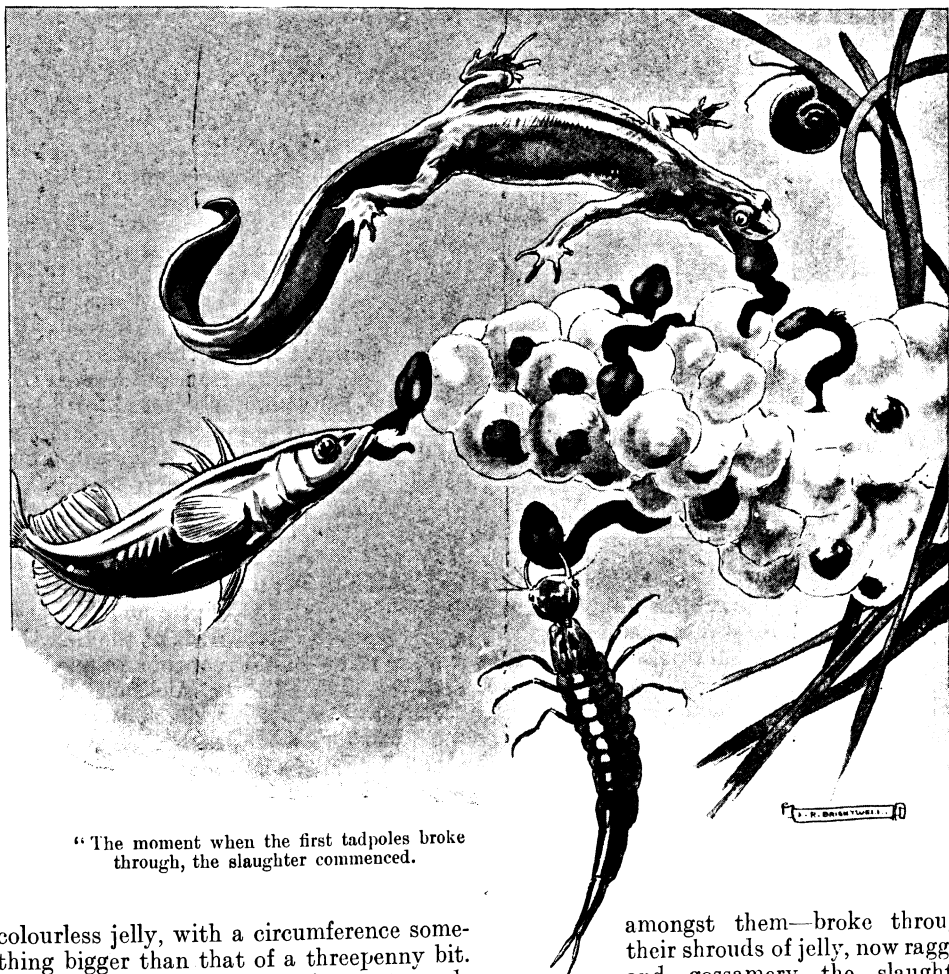
As the days went by and the water gradually warmed, the game grew fiercer and fiercer. The weeds became clogged and weighted with the gelatinous egg masses of the snails, which egg masses immediately became objects of the greatest interest to half the denizens of the pond. They were watching for the eggs to hatch. So soon as the egg clumps began to disintegrate, tried to move in several directions at once, as the baby snails began to struggle free, then would fish, leech, and beetle pounce upon them. Could one's hearing have been attuned to horse-pond pitch, that watery atmosphere must have been continually riven with the clash of jaws and the smack of lips. Homes were being built and families reared by parents that never knew when the last moment might come in a world that, to the casual human observer, would have spelt stagnation.

And then—bang, splash!—there entered one day a frog. An ever-widening series of concentric circles marked her entry at the surface, a chain of silvery bubbles traced



her passage to the muddy bed. She squatted there like some fantastic horse-pond version of immortal Harlequin, a long-limbed spangled shape that forged its way amongst the weed thickets and presently departed, leaving behind a crinkled heap of jelly enclosing what looked like a mass of buckshot. Within three days the water had filled the jelly mass until it swelled from the size of a man's fist to the bulk of a fair-sized vegetable marrow. Each "shot" was now seen to be enclosed in a globule of clear

curious colony. The jelly which enclosed him not only nourished his swiftly-forming frame, but, by keeping him apart from his many brothers and sisters, it ensured his free respiration and, moreover, protected him from a host of enemies. Sticklebacks poked the jelly lump aggressively; beetles and their deadly larvæ clambered over it; snails crawled upon it; newts reclined upon it as upon a raft, but still the jelly mass stood firm until the day of hatching. From the moment when the first tadpoles—Rana



"The moment when the first tadpoles broke through, the slaughter commenced.

colourless jelly, with a circumference something bigger than that of a threepenny bit. As the mass filled with water it rose towards and eventually reached the surface. The uppermost of the shot, being nearer to the light and warmth, began to stir with life before their less forward fellows beneath them.

Rana, as we propose to call the hero of this article—that being his generic name in natural history—was a "top dog" in this

amongst them—broke through their shrouds of jelly, now ragged and gossamery, the slaughter commenced. As the infant tadpoles hung, each by a sucker on his under-surface, to the ragged remnants of their home and cradle, fish and grub and water-hen methodically picked them off. As the days slowly lengthened, so did the tadpoles. They grew from mere blobs of black, with little wriggly tails, to creatures



showing well-formed heads and bodies of a fine sepia tint spangled with dots of old gold and ending in tails so well-finned and full of life that they propelled their lumpish owners through the water with dazzling rapidity. As the tadpoles developed and the crimson gill-trees gave place to internal gills only hinted at by a row of external flaps or slits on either side the beastie's head, the whole pond seemed to be peopled by none save tadpoles. North, south, east, and west the wriggling black blobs hurried hither and thither. It was not a sight to soothe the "livery" or those addicted to disorders of their digestive system.

Every day—nay, every hour—the plot thickened, became more and more complex. Towards the end of March the older tadpoles had developed a strange bulge on either side of the tail. They hovered ever and anon above the shrinking algæ-coated remnants of the discarded jelly lump, and began to nibble tentatively at the laggards of the great frog family. For the first and last time in their lives they became cannibals. The bulge, now very noticeable in the more advanced tadpoles, steadily increased, and presently gave place to a pair of tiny legs. Cannibalism now reached its height. The development of the frog's limbs is achieved at the expense of the tail and, indeed, of the whole animal's personality. As the tiny feet pierced the skin on either side of the tail, and, a day later, the legs emerged, weak and lank, it was as though the tiny batrachian striving towards the completion of his life cycle had publicly proclaimed himself a weakling. He was, indeed, in a most unfortunate stage of transition. By the time his fore-legs had appeared, his tail had lost still more in magnitude, and though the hind limbs had by now attained the form of the adult frog, the heavy head and body were a distinct disadvantage against the limbless but powerfully-tailed tadpoles. Hence it was that many a froglet, who seemed to be successfully nearing the climax of his metamorphosis, came to an untimely end at the hands of his brethren, now avowedly carnivorous, out to engulf all whom they might overpower.

It is frankly impossible to draw a coherent word picture of the teeming millions of that horse-pond as it was during those later days of March. The human observer, trained in pond lore, might have counted by the naked eye several hundred thousands of living creatures. Could he have looked upon it through the lens of some colossal high-

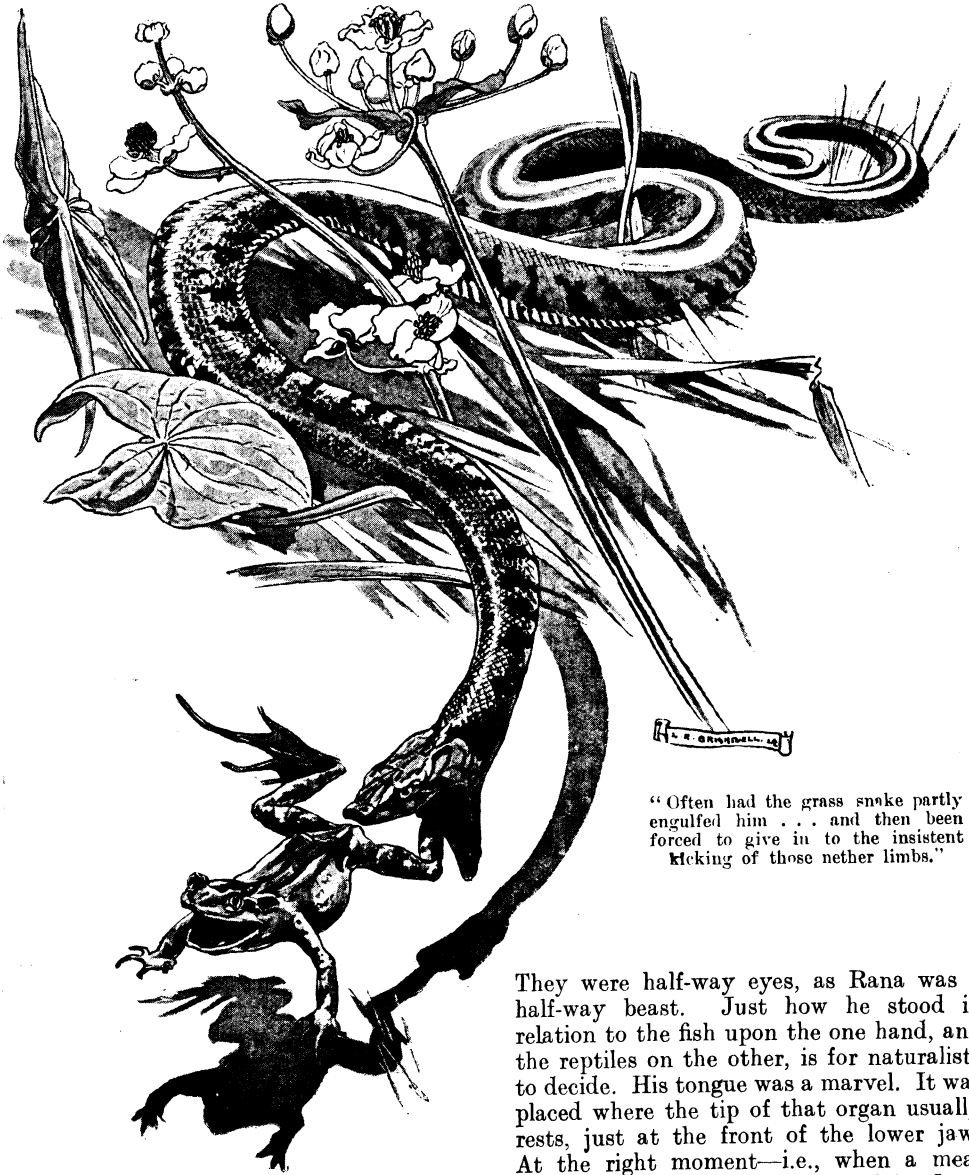
power microscope, he would have realised that a census of the pond would have run into eight or nine figures at the lowest estimation. Our froglet—*Rana*—was a giant in the land, and might—and, no doubt, often did—carry some hundred thousands of the lower beasts upon his sides, and never feel their weight. In that amazing world, so stagnant to the casual observer, beast preyed on plant, plant on beast, and both forms of life preyed upon its own race, often on its own species, till one might have marvelled that any survived. And yet many did survive. Moreover, the race was not always to the strongest. By sheer luck—one can call it nothing else—*Rana* developed all four limbs, absorbed his tail, and, crowning achievement, changed his skin. Now, it is no light matter for an animal, whether insect, spider, crustacean, or reptile, to change its skin and live to tell the tale. *Rana*, steadily losing in vitality whilst he pushed forth his legs, at last lost his caudal appendage and struggled clear of his skin. It fell from him like a gossamery cloak and sank towards the bottom. Half-way down it caught a fragment of snail shell, broken from a tenement, the owner whereof had been dragged forth by a leech ten minutes previously. Skin and shell sank towards the mud. A half-grown tadpole gulped down a quarter of the skin, a wandering water-shrimp took another quarter. As the remainder, with the fragment of shell attached, reached the ground level, a caddis worm seized a bit of the shell and added it to his tubular house of stick and stone. The last shreds of the cast skin came to rest upon the roots of a water-weed, and there the Master Alchemist turned them into life-giving manures, gaseous and solid, which made the little starwort plants shoot upwards towards the light and bespangle the surface of the pond, so that in June more than one passer-by stopped to look upon the emerald mosaic of the pond surface and say "How pretty!" Nature does not waste anything.

Meanwhile, what happened to our hero, a magnificent frog-to-be, now nearly five-eighths of an inch in length? He was so nearly a frog that we may regard him as quite eligible to sit for his portrait. Beginning at his dwindling tail, withering at the tip, he appeared to be all hind legs, which limbs would presently altogether dominate the rest of him. They were already enormous, and had so asserted themselves that their junction with his backbone had



forced that region upwards and forwards until it developed a hump. His body was a mere bag. Entirely without ribs, he was compelled to take in the air by mouthfuls, so that Rana appeared to be in a permanent state of palpitation. He

voyage of many feet. His head was something really to hold the eye. Rana's eyes might, to an interested observer, have been the key to the whole animal. Their expression combined the glassy stare of the cod with the beaming glance of the lizard.



"Often had the grass snake partly engulfed him . . . and then been forced to give in to the insistent kicking of those nether limbs."

seemed to be always on the verge of "dying of fear." He was obliged to force each mouthful of air into his lungs by gulping. His fore limbs were chiefly organs for grasping, yet wonderfully springy, for they could take the full weight of his body when landing from an aerial

They were half-way eyes, as Rana was a half-way beast. Just how he stood in relation to the fish upon the one hand, and the reptiles on the other, is for naturalists to decide. His tongue was a marvel. It was placed where the tip of that organ usually rests, just at the front of the lower jaw. At the right moment—i.e., when a meal hove in sight—his tongue could be flung forward at lightning speed, its cloven and sticky tip guaranteed to adhere to the coveted morsel, and the tit-bit flung holubolus down his throat. With a glance at Rana's throat we will draw the cold-blooded dissection of our hero to a close. His throat



was capable of extraordinary expansion. It was the harp on which he would play when he arrived at full frog's estate; it was the one means of expressing his emotions, an instrument, indeed, on which to make wild music as attractive to the object of his choice as is the thrush's ballad to his mate. When Rana lost his tail he took hold upon life with every fibre of his being. He changed completely from a semi-fish-shaped scavenger and fratricide to a wholesome light- and air-loving creature, at once an ornament to the countryside and a benefactor to every farmer and allotment-holder. He ate nothing but insects. The green fly climbing laboriously up the plant stem, intent upon spoiling fresh young shoots, the infant slug with his heart set on the young cabbages, the early grubs of half a hundred sorts of insects injurious to crops, were checked in their careers by Rana's lightning tongue. Incapable of harming any human being, he went through life by no virtue of his own, but, by orders from his awful master Nature, doing good.

We have dwelt too much upon Rana, perhaps—isolated him, indeed, treated of him as though he were the one frog in his particular corner of England. Let us hasten to correct this impression. He was one of a hundred million. Though countless legions of his brethren had emerged from thousands of masses of frog spawn in the surrounding countryside, and had been checked—permanently checked—ere they attained to full froghood, enough survived to blacken the borders of every pond and ditch, and to bespatter acres of the marshes, grazing land, and market gardens with hurrying black shapes. Whilst thus in their childhood, the young frogs were exceedingly sensitive to the growing power of the sun. A hot day sent them all into sanctuary in water-logged rat-holes, where the voles caught and ate them, or beneath the friendly shelter of the rising spikes of arrowhead, rush, and marsh grass. A shower brought them forth like giants refreshed, for a frog must have moisture if he is to live. Thus it came to pass that old Joe Wedderley was inspired to pause one afternoon and, leaning heavily upon his two sticks, recall the time when, "come thirty years ago," he saw a similar "shower o' frogs," and discourse at rather tedious length upon the subject to some youngsters homeward bound from school. He chose a bad audience, and his reminiscences fell upon irreverent, though outwardly respectful,

ears. For his listeners were fresh from the "Nature study" class, and were learning to appreciate the frog at his proper valuation. Old Joe Wedderley recalled, chuckling asthmatically the while, how he and his forebears used to "blow" a frog, by means of a straw, until the wretched creature, filled with foul gases, burst as one might burst a paper bag. This cheerful tit-bit from the wisdom of our forefathers gained but faint applause, and so the generations went their ways, leagues apart.

Yet old Joe's recollections of frog plagues were founded on older lore—one cannot call it knowledge—than are our modern gleanings from Nature's store.

Ever ready to take the easiest way, man has put his own construction on natural phenomena from times immemorial. From Aristotle onwards, through the works of Pliny in many musty volumes on the "Ephemerides of the Curious Things of Nature," in the works of Ray, Redi, Cardan and Pison—nay, even in the writings of Gilbert White—those interested may find much sage speculation on the curious theme. Perhaps the very finest disquisition on a "rain of frogs" is offered by one Conrad Wolfart, or, as he preferred to call himself, Conradus Lycosthenes Rubeaquis. In 1557 this gentleman of Alsace published an authentic account to the effect that "rain mixed with frogs" fell upon a day "in Germany." Later, he asserts that near the town of Colmar "toads and frogs fell from heaven in such abundance that people killed them with clubs, and that later their dead bodies so infected the air that the authorities had them collected and carried away."

But space presses, and we must hurry on in the track of Rana as he made his way, all unobserved, between the boots of old Joe Wedderley as that worthy lamented these degenerate times and the brave days of his forebears, when young folks knew how to take their sport. Rana made his way, covering some hundred yards in the course of ten days, across the water meadows, and landed in a lake. The lake had once been the *pièce de résistance* of a private park, but times had changed. The jerry-builders' signboards had risen on the old estate; already a row of houses had sprung up where once had stood the manorial lawn, and the lake was scheduled to be drained to make way for a modern motor road. The mass of life, animal and vegetable, in and around the lake, awoke one



morning to a sudden and hideous shrinking of the water. The swans, gluttoned with infant frogs, were the first to take their leave, flying heavily, with outstretched necks, and eyes fixed upon the distant river. Then the water dropped more rapidly, left the lower portions of the rush stems standing black with mud above the dwindling water, indescribably congested with animals unable to get away. A few early dragon-flies and the first battalions of the gnats and midges climbed above water-level, made the last great change, and flew away. The rest were left to perish in the mud or make a final bid for life and liberty overland. Hence it came about that harassed householders, newly ensconced in homes wherein the plaster was scarcely dry upon the walls, found themselves sweeping—yes, literally sweeping—froglets from their front gardens. Not only were there frogs in numbers that might have affrighted Pharaoh, but the toad, late to breed and deposit his spawn, contributed uncountable swarms of progeny to swell the mass of life that covered every cherished rose-bed and half-made lawn, choked the drains, and invaded the very living-rooms. Rana, in escaping from the pond, hopped into a garden, made his way to the house, recovered somewhat in the welcome damp below a scullery sink, spent a night beneath a brand-new piano in a brand-new drawing-room, passed out in the morning as the milk came in, and eventually found himself exhausted in the still unfinished gutter of Arcadia Road. There he rested certain hours, where he was tickled by a kitten, pecked by an escaped duckling, chivvied by a blundering dor-beetle, and endured agonies of drought until the rain came. It came, as rain so often does in mid-June, with a burst—a lukewarm luscious torrent that swept him along the ill-formed gutter and landed him, more dead than alive, in a brimming mid-road pool. He just escaped being carried through a grating into the established drainage system—and oblivion.

A frog, like the ideal best boat, can go where it is damp. When the weather was dry, Rana lay low. So soon as the sky was overcast and the earth gave up its moisture, then he truly lived. Rainy weather saw him fairly in his glory—literally and truly in his glory, for at the end of September he was everything a frog should be. At a bound he could cover fifty times his own length. Imagine what this power meant to him. It took him away at

the right moment, just as the cow's heel was about to crush him, saved him from the net of the human pond dipper, and so ordained that he should continue to serve the agricultural interest instead of ending his days in a vivarium or a scientific laboratory. His leaping powers helped him successfully to run the gauntlet of a flock of ducks, dodge the watchful heron, the swan, and the hungry water-rat. Yes, it needed a sharp eye and a lightning thrust to capture Rana. Many attempts were made, but all failed, for Rana was the perfect harlequin of the countryside. It was a case of "Here I am" and (jump) "Where am I?" The aggressor was caught guessing every time.

The close of that first year found Rana grown to the size of an average hen's egg. Resting on a water-lily leaf, crouching in a ditch, or, when night fell, leaping across the countryside at a pace that would, comparatively speaking, take you or me from London to Land's End in something less than two days, he was ever the most capable and self-helpful of animals. A man capable of such jumping powers might well have made his way across England in the time that it took Rana, in his first year, to cross a score of meadows and meet the first chill mists of early autumn in a wood. There he came to anchor. Nature said "Stop!" Slowly and laboriously he clambered up the bole of a huge old beech, tumbled head first into the first cranny that offered—a water-logged hole full of leaves—and there stayed.

Long before the first crocus bud had opened, Rana was about. So soon as the early moths and grubs were stirring, the harlequin of the woodlands was upon their track. "Smack!" went his tongue, and the farmer was a foe the less. Whenever the sun had a clear field, Rana "took the road" and checked full many a promising career. He grew apace. The morning dews and warm spring showers kept his skin moist, and when the sun shone, all the insect world forgathered. What more could frog desire? If the rain held off for a week or two on end, and dews were insufficient to maintain that curious clammy feeling inseparable from a happy, healthy frog, then Rana had but to leap into the nearest pond. There food was somewhat scarcer, but always forthcoming if he kept his eyes open. Resting idly on the surface, his mottled body harmonising perfectly with the clash of light and shade, reflection and counter reflection on the mirror of the pool, he would laze for hours



together, until some early dragon-fly or caddis essayed to make the last great change. Then, as the perfect insect crept laboriously from its pupal sheath, Rana, with one powerful stroke of his hind legs, glided towards it, raised his head and shoulders clear of the water, and the "tongue trick" ended all things for the insect.

Rana's wonderful hind legs propelled him over part of Kent during the next year or two. The winters he spent beneath a big stone used to prop up a rickety farm gate, in a hollow tree, in an old rabbit hole, or in some moss-lined cleft made by tree roots straddling the steep banks of a muddy lane. Spring, summer, and autumn meant to him a long, lazy period of luxurious ease and heavy meals, punctuated by hairbreadth escapes. He shook himself free of the duck or heron, or just evaded the naturalist's dip-net a dozen times in a week, sometimes as many times in a single day. Often had the grass snake partly engulfed him, even up to his arm-pits, and then been forced to give in to the insistent kicking of those nether limbs. There is a limit even to the grass snake's swallowing capacity. He had been all but victimised by that insidious vagrant of the countryside, the adder. Rana and the adder were both perfect specimens of camouflage. The spots and bars of the one and the wavy diamond pattern of the other were fashioned to harmonise with the play of sunlight and shadow through waving grass stems and the kaleidoscope designs made by the criss-cross growths of luscious meadowland. Nature had at once ordained that Rana should be invisible to the adder, and that the adder should be able to approach Rana unobserved, in the rare event of Rana electing to rest upon some exposed piece of ground. Therefore the game went on from month to month and year to year, the long hind legs of the frog taking their owner at the last moment into safety, and the adder's jaws closing viciously—*just too late*.

When Rana reached his third year, spring meant something more to him than a mere awakening to appetite. It moved him to join thousands of his fellows and raise the "frogs' chorus," a strain that, as the April sun sank to rest, drowned the village church bells and effectually eclipsed the flute-like strains of the complacent toads. Those warty-skinned and slow-paced worthies were, like Rana's brethren, inspired to sing the "love song" when spring at last aroused the countryside. Presently they would wind

their trailing strings of eggs around the tangled water-weeds, and in the meanwhile they made the lengthening evenings melodious. The song once finished, each toad clambered heavily ashore and plodded methodically up and down the village streets, the allotment pathways, and the peaceful weed-choked alleys of the churchyard. There they made a late dinner of the trailing slug, the cellar snail, the all-too-early worm—everything, in fact, that the daylight-loving frog missed. Given the worst of names since the very earliest times, the toads ambled on their ways, saving, as the frogs saved, many a crop from insect foes. Timid and harmless as the toads were, Nature had decreed that one of them should be the end of Rana, and it happened thus.

Rana, in his fifth year, was nearly equal in bulk to a month-old rabbit. He was a monster. A man endowed with his jumping powers could have cleared a wall one hundred feet in height. Rana could jump, and on a warm June night it chanced that he jumped too far. In eluding a playful ditch-exploring kitten, one of his huge hind limbs caught a bramble thorn. That was nothing. Rana did not, could not know what pain meant as you and I know its meaning. His second leap took him, spreadeagled, athwart a half-grown toad. Now, the hedgehog will kill and eat a toad without hesitation. He is probably poor *Bufo's* only enemy. The toad, when he felt Rana's weight suddenly imposed upon him, instinctively exuded some drops of a heavy viscous yellow fluid. The oily, evil-smelling stuff came into contact with the gaping rent in Rana's thigh. No matter. Hey, presto! bang! and Rana was off, intent on running down a low-flying pond beetle. He caught it as it clung to a cabbage leaf, and when its protesting legs forced themselves between his tightly-shut lips, thrust them back with a firm right hand. But that was his last meal. Exhaustion came upon him suddenly and horribly. He essayed to make for shelter, but his leaps became shorter and shorter, and presently he sank into a long last rest, whilst the assassin, incapable of desiring or committing wilful harm, shuffled on his way, killing more garden pests than do half the patent insecticides on the market.

In the dawn arrived the undertakers. They came by air, and were attired, not in funeral black, but deepest blue and brightest scarlet. They were burying beetles. They had eggs to lay—precious eggs that would



shortly hatch out into grubs. When the grubs emerged, they would eat. The more they had to eat, the sooner they would attain to full burying-beetle's estate, and perpetuate the glory of the burying-beetle family, one of the oldest families in the world. But to place the cherished representatives of such a noble family in an exposed position, open to attacks by rats and mice and crows, all the scum of Ditch Land, would be madness. They must be first placed within the dead body of Rana, and so assured of a meal. Then the body

And so, reader, the curtain drops upon a crowd of busy beetles—for the first pair was soon joined by others—shovelling away



"He caught it . . . and when its protesting legs forced themselves between his tightly-shut lips, thrust them back with a firm right hand."

must be decently interred, thus assuring the precious heirs of burying beetlehood a safe retreat from all their many foes.

the earth from under our hero, until bit by bit, inch by inch, he sinks into the earth—moves slowly but surely, as moves the hour



hand of a watch, until the kindly earth closes over him, and with a whirr of gauzy wings the undertakers depart. Rana's body, checked in its career of safeguarding the crops, might have lingered on to pollute the earth and undo much of the good work

its owner achieved during life. But already the dead and decaying offal is quickening new potentialities for good, preparing for their life-work yet other guardians of the general health. "Waste" is an unmeaning word to Nature.



## RECOGNITION.

ONE night, O Loveliness, about your door,  
 When dusk hung in the roses, I espied  
 A magic none hath ever seen before—  
 Two lilies lifted in their shining pride,  
 Each one a-tiptoe on her swaying stalk,  
 And most amazedly I saw them stand  
 And heard them unbelievably make talk  
 In the immortal tongue of Lily Land.

Said this one to her neighbour blossom: "See  
 How slenderly she grows, how tall, how white,  
 This lily, our sweet sister! Can there be  
 In any garden anything so bright?"  
 And then before your beauty they were still  
 All the long, happy night, those other two,  
 With crowned heads craned above your window-sill,  
 To marvel at the peerlessness of you.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.





"Mr. Morris, indeed, had sat up so sharply that he almost fell out of his chair. His mouth opened and so remained; his pale eyes seemed to project still further."

# THE SUBSTITUTE SCOUNDREL

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

THE young man paused at the corner and stared blankly up and down the long, empty road. This eminently select suburban neighbourhood was an uncharted mystery to him, and he was completely ignorant as to which way he ought now to turn. Nor was there at the moment any person in sight of whom he might seek guidance; for it was that mid-day hour at which all honest denizens of Suburbia are engaged, with more or less enthusiasm, upon yesterday's cold mutton.

To the young man, standing thus at a

loss, there came presently a noise—a distant noise, but swiftly drawing near; a noise apparently of human origin; a loud and very angry vocal noise. The young man, turning, saw a dark object shoot into view far down the road; in a moment this was recognisable as a bath-chair, travelling at a high speed.

Now, the average bath-chair has many admirable qualities, but speed is not among them. It is a comfortable, even soothing conveyance, but it does not hustle. For a health-giving amble round the park a



bath-chair is the ideal vehicle, but as a means of catching trains it is apt to prove a broken reed. Wherefore the young man regarded with considerable interest and not a little surprise the bath-chair now approaching.

This bath-chair was moving with astonishing velocity. It rocked from side to side, zig-zagged back and forth across the road, anon leaped into the air like a live thing. Its motive power was a large man of seedy aspect, clad in a bowler hat slightly too large for him, and the greenish residue of what, in happier days, had been a morning-coat. This individual was covering the ground at an ungainly gallop, the bath-chair bounding in his wake. From the bath-chair itself proceeded that noise which had first caught the young man's attention and which now resolved itself into comparative coherency.

"Stop! Stop, you blistered perisher! Oh, my sainted Sam, wait till I get at you! Will you stop, you pot-bellied pub-crawler!" From the depths of the bath-chair emerged a face—a furious masculine face almost entirely shrouded in hair of a virulent red. A fierce red eye, bulging with rage, rolled wildly at the young man.

"Stop him, you fool!" urged the face.

The young man hesitated, but not for long. It was his habit—and one that contributed largely to his enjoyment of life—to decline no new experience; and it seemed fairly obvious that here was an experience of pronounced novelty. He would never forgive himself if he let this singular equipage pass out of his life without explanation of its singularity. He jumped out into the road, spread wide his arms, and barred the way.

The seedy man, his progress thus arrested, slithered to a halt, panting loudly. Viewed at close quarters, he proved to be a person of small personal charm, having a fat, mottled face and a nose of that hue which accompanies a settled disbelief in the first principles of temperance. It was apparent that he had very recently been reinforcing his convictions, for he swayed noticeably upon his feet, and the glance which he directed at the young man was both vinous and vague.

"'Ulo!" he observed cheerfully.

"Why the hurry?" asked the young man courteously.

A violent snort from the bath-chair drew his attention to the third person present. This was a smallish, fierce-looking gentleman

of middle age, whose bushy red beard hid the greater part of his visage. There were apparent, however, a blunt, pugnacious nose and a pair of ferocious eyes. A wide black sombrero sat upon the flaming head, and a flowing cape elcaked the rest of this unusual personage.

"He's drunk, the perisher!" snorted Redbeard. "First he dawdles along like a blistered paralytic, and when I tell him to go faster he bolts with me!"

The perisher giggled happily and addressed the young man in a tone of amused reminiscence.

"Y'oughter seen 'im! Talk abaht larf! 'Go faster, can't yer?' 'e says, an' I done so. Coo! Y'oughter seen the old—"

"Clear out, you hog!" said Redbeard crisply.

The seedy man's mood underwent one of those sudden changes peculiar to persons in his condition. He became indignant, even bellicose.

"Ho! 'Og, am I? 'An' 'oo arst me to go faster? 'Go faster, can't yer?' says you, an' when I does, yer don't like it, yer old—"

"That's enough," said the young man.

A watery eye surveyed him with intense dislike. "Ho, is it? An' 'oo the 'ell might you be? 'Oo arst you to butt in? Better 'op it, see, if yer don't want me to do yer up so's yer own mother won't know yer!"

"But that," answered the young man amiably, "is just what I do want."

The seedy man was in no frame of mind to exercise discretion or even ordinary common-sense. The idea seemed, at the moment, a sound one, and he acted upon it. He snarled and swung a knobby fist at the young man's face. The young man, withdrawing his countenance from the danger-zone, smote the vinous one quite gently but very scientifically upon the jaw. The vinous one sat down in the road with great abruptness.

Approving noises emanated from the bath-chair.

"Ha! That's the stuff! Couldn't have done it better myself! Here, you perisher!" A coin flew forth and ricocheted from the too-large bowler. "Take your money and beat it, or I'll give you in charge as a public nuisance, you bat-eyed gazook!"

The gazook, unhurt but shaken almost to sobriety, grabbed the coin, scrambled to his feet, turned and shamled hurriedly away,



casting nervous glances over his shoulder as he went.

"That," said Redbeard, "is the last time I give a job to a slab-sided dead-beat because my daughter says he has a kind face! Now, how the devil shall I get home?"

"Well," offered the young man, "if you'll allow me to officiate, vice the perisher, resigned——"

"Devilish good of you. Not in a hurry yourself? Had lunch—no? Lunch with us, then. First to the right, second to the left."

Thus the bath-chair resumed its journey, but now at a more decorous, bath-chairlike pace. Its occupant, who seemed to be a man of strong conversational instincts, continued to hurl staccato remarks at the young man's back.

"First time I've been out in this young hearse, and look what happens! Sprained my blistered ankle the other day. My name's Lupin, by the way—Timothy Lupin."

The young man started and swung round, but Mr. Lupin gave him no opportunity for speech.

"Heard of me, eh? Lots of people have, but that don't seem to make 'em buy my pictures. And when I do sell one, I get stung. There's a scoundrel coming to see me to-day—— Hullo, there's my daughter! Hi, Betty!"

The girl at whom this shout was directed had emerged from a side turning ahead of them; at Redbeard's stentorian bellow she glanced back and retraced her steps. At sight of her the young man forgot completely what he had been about to say; he was content to stand dumbly, staring in open admiration.

She who had thus affected him was a slim, dark-haired damsel of notable grace and comeliness. To attempt a detailed description of feminine beauty is neither an easy nor a profitable task; let it suffice, therefore, to say that her hair, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, voice, and carriage were all of the very highest class, and that there was every excuse for the unwinking stare with which, forgetful of his manners, the young man welcomed her.

"Hullo, father!" said Miss Lupin, bestowing a faintly surprised glance upon the tall individual who was clutching the handle of the bath-chair and looking at her as if she were some kind of ghostly visitant. "Where's Perks?"

"You may well ask, my girl! But for

this young feller who's very obligingly pulling me home, and who's going to lunch with us, if there's enough food, Perks might have been the death of me!" And he sketched briefly, but with a wealth of vivid adjectives, the circumstances of Mr. Perks's exit.

"Oh, dear!" said the girl. "I'm so sorry!"

"You may well be sorry!" barked her parent. "If I——"

"For Perks, I mean. He's got a wife and dozens of children, and I expect he wasn't really drunk—only excited at getting a job."

"Excited!" roared Mr. Lupin. "Ex—— Oh, you women! Well, get on, get on! I've an appointment this afternoon. Any message from that scoundrel Frayle, Betty?"

"No. I wish he wasn't coming, father. You'll only get overheated, and burst a blood-vessel or something."

"I'd burst one of his, if it wasn't for this blistered ankle!" retorted Mr. Lupin ghoulishly. "I'd give him the best hiding he's ever had! Frayle by name and frail by nature! Ha!" His fierce red eye encountered the young man, who was regarding him in considerable astonishment. "By gum!" said Mr. Lupin, as one suddenly inspired. "By gum! You're a big, strong feller, now! Wonder if you'd—well, we'll talk about that later. What's your name, by the way?"

"Oliver," said the young man.

"Right. My daughter Betty. Nice girl, and more intelligent than she looks. Prop and stay of my declining years."

His daughter smiled tolerantly upon him. "My father," she explained to the young man, "suffers from a perpetual rush of words to the mouth. Otherwise he's quite normal. We'd better push on if we're to get any lunch."

Five minutes later Oliver steered the bath-chair in at the gate of a large house set back from the road. He had said but little on the way; nor had Miss Lupin proved more loquacious. Her father, however, had talked all the time; he was talking now as, leaning upon the young man's arm, he hobbled up the steps, down a passage, and into a vast, barn-like studio.

"Workshop," he explained. "Eat here, as a rule. Saves time, coal, and money. Hustle up that lunch, Betty."

While Betty hustled up the lunch, the young man examined his surroundings. The



studio was cathedral-like in its vastness; the few articles of furniture merely emphasised its dimensions. Everywhere were canvases in all stages of completion; they adorned the walls, stood stacked in corners, lay piled upon chairs. Then, as Betty entered again, Art faded from the young man's thoughts. Never had he seen anything so wholly adorable as Betty without her hat.

that scoundrel Frayle doesn't come before I've finished. Ah, that reminds me!" The fierce red eye swivelled round upon Oliver. "Do me a favour, will you?"

"If I can," returned the young man politely.

"Care to execute justice for me?"

"I beg your pardon?" said Oliver blankly.

"Father," interposed Miss Lupin, "for goodness' sake, *behave!* Do you want Mr. Oliver to go straight to the Lunacy Commissioners when he leaves here?" She smiled reassuringly at Oliver, patting her eccentric parent's head the while in a soothing manner. "You see, Mr. Oliver, father's been—well, swindled, and he doesn't like it. He——"



"Approving noises emanated from the bath-chair."

"Fortunately," said she, busy at the table, "I know father's little ways, Mr. Oliver, and take precautions. Every time he goes out he brings somebody home. Yesterday he brought four, and one was a milkman."

"And why not?" demanded her parent. "Just as great an artist in his way as I am in mine. Both water-colourists. Ha! Corkscrew, Betty. Sit down, man. Hope

"Like it!" exploded Mr. Lupin. "Like——"

"Be quiet, father! I'll explain this, and then perhaps Mr. Oliver will make allowances for you."

"Oh, all right!" said her parent sulkily. "Push that cheese across, then."

"Last year," began Betty, "father had



a big picture in the Academy. Nobody bought it—it was a four-hundred-pounder—but a print of it was reproduced afterwards as a double-centre in *The Piccadilly Magazine*. A little time ago a man called Frayle wrote from some place in Canada to ask if he could buy the original. Father's a perfect fool at business, bless him, and he turned the thing over to his agent. Mr.

Canada before Mr. Morris got the money for it. A fortnight ago Mr. Frayle wrote to say that he didn't think the picture was



"The young man . . . smote the vinous one quite gently but very scientifically upon the jaw."

Morris—that's the agent—wrote to Mr. Frayle and told him the price. Then there seems to have been a muddle of some kind, because somehow the picture was sent to

worth the money, and that he would only pay half what father asked, which he has done. Mr. Morris is very upset about it, of course, but he doesn't seem able to



do much, because Canada's a long way off."

"Undoubtedly!" cried Mr. Lupin, unable any longer to maintain silence. "But Frayle's in London now, Oliver. I saw his name in the paper. He seems to be a biggish bug in his way—engineer or something. Rot him! It gave the name of his hotel, so just on chance I wrote and asked him to call. Oh, hellish polite I was! Blest if the perisher didn't write back that he'd come to-day! How's that for nerve, eh? I suppose he thinks anybody can bluff a fool of an artist! If it wasn't for my blistered ankle, I'd—but I'm hoping you'll do it for me."

There was a brief pause.

"Correct me if I'm wrong," said Oliver mildly, "but it sounds as if you're inviting me to assault somebody on your behalf."

"So I am!" hissed Mr. Lupin. "Knock Hades out of the perisher!"

"Father," interposed his daughter warningly, "remember the blood-vessels! Forgive his ferocity, Mr. Oliver. He's all worked up. Simmer down, father dear. You can't go about knocking Hades out of people, you know. It isn't being done this season, old man."

"Hark at her!" snorted Mr. Lupin with abysmal scorn. "Telling her own father he can't touch a reptile that's swindled him out of two hundred pounds! Why, a hundred years ago I'd have shot him full of holes in Hyde Park!"

"But are you quite sure," asked Oliver, "that he *has* swindled you?"

"Sure? Haven't I got his letter? Haven't I got Morris's cheque for half what it ought to be? Sure? Bah! I tell you," roared Mr. Lupin, pounding the table violently, "the perisher needs a thrashing, deserves a thrashing, and would darned well *get* a thrashing if I could stand up! Think I'd ask you if I could do it myself? My sainted Sam," said Mr. Lupin peevishly, "it's not much to ask! It's not every day you get a chance to give a genuine, hand-sewn villain a little bit of what he deserves!"

"It seems to me," said Oliver slowly, "that if this fellow Frayle *has* treated you this way, he certainly ought to be thrashed."

"Ha! That's the spirit! Much obliged, young feller! Lay into him good and——"

"Suppose," asked Betty gently, "he's an old, old man?"

"By gum," said her parent rather flatly, "never thought of that! Well," he added, cheering up again, "he can't be so very

ancient. He's an engineer, and they die pretty young, don't they? If he—— Yes, yes, what is it?"

The door of the studio had opened to admit a diminutive maid-servant, who drew back hastily as the inflamed eye of her employer fell upon her.

"Please, sir—Mr. Morris."

"Ha! Splendid! Just the man we want. Show him in, girl."

Mr. Morris, entering the studio a moment later, came forward with the assured step of one confident of his welcome. He was a tall, stoutish gentleman in the middle forties, irreproachably morning-coated, spatted, tied, and waistcoated. His countenance was round, pink and bland, his pale eyes slightly protuberant, his moustache admirably trained. His bearing and manner suggested that he was not excessively unpopular with himself.

"Ah, my dear Lupin," said Mr. Morris warmly. "Still *hors de combat*, I regret to see. And Miss Betty, bonny as ever, if I may say so." His glance falling upon Oliver, he paused inquiringly.

"Oliver," explained Mr. Lupin briefly. "Friend of mine. Best amateur bath-chairman in the Home Counties. Well, Morris, what's the news?"

Mr. Morris sank gracefully into a chair and delicately hitched his beautiful trouserings.

"I have called to say good-bye, Lupin—or, rather, *au revoir*. I am summoned to New York on very urgent business, and am not yet certain when I shall return."

"That so? Well, have a good time and keep off wood-alcohol. Any word from Frayle?"

Mr. Morris shook a sorrowful head. "Alas, no! My last letter remains unanswered. It is most unfortunate, from our point of view, that Frayle did not agree in writing to the price before the picture was dispatched. Even now I cannot understand how the mistake arose. I freely admit, my dear Lupin, that the fault was mine, due to my anxiety to push the deal through for you. I cannot tell you how deeply I regret it, or how distressed I am that necessity takes me away at this unsatisfactory stage. Ah," said Mr. Morris, coughing in a gentlemanly way, "that reminds me. There is still, I think, a small amount owing to me in respect of your show at the Worcester Gallery last month. If it is quite convenient to you——"

"Right!" said Mr. Lupin. "Cheque—"



book, Betty. But you mustn't go yet, Morris. Got a surprise for you."

"Really?"

"Visitor coming—I hope. Friend of yours—and mine."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Morris, courteously interested. "Now, who can that be?"

"Fellow from Canada. Name of Frayle. Ha! Thought that'd make you sit up!"

Mr. Morris, indeed, had sat up so sharply that he almost fell out of his chair. His mouth opened, and so remained; his pale eyes seemed to project still further. He stared fishily at his host for quite ten seconds; then he swallowed convulsively and with a palpable effort achieved speech.

"Frayle? But he's in——"

"London. Arrived the other day. I saw it in the paper, and asked him to call. Good thing you turned up, Morris. Between us we ought to make the blistered scoundrel sing pretty small. If he tries—— What's up?"

For Mr. Morris had risen to his feet and was examining his watch. "Frightfully sorry, my dear Lupin, but the fact is—just remembered a most important appointment. Is that clock right? By Jove, I'm late already! If you'll just write that cheque, I must be——"

"Nonsense, man!" said Mr. Lupin irritably. "Sit down! Now you're here, you've got to stop and argue with him. You're a better business man than I am, and it's up to you to help smash this perisher."

"But really I must——"

The voice of Oliver was heard for the first time since Mr. Morris's entry.

"Perhaps I can persuade Mr. Morris to stay. Mr. Lupin, may I see the letter from Frayle—the one refusing to pay the right price?"

"Eh?" said Mr. Lupin, surprised. "The letter? Yes, of course. Why not? Get it, Betty."

His daughter went to a desk in a corner, took therefrom an envelope and handed it to the young man. Mr. Morris looked again at his watch and moved towards the door.

"Well, good-bye! Awfully sorry I must——"

"Half a second, Mr. Morris," said Oliver. He rose and sauntered across the room, studying the letter in his hand. "H'm—typed, I see. Mr. Morris, here's a bit of news for you. Frayle never wrote this."

There was an instant of astonished silence.

"What!" said Mr. Lupin blankly.

Mr. Morris accomplished a sceptical little laugh. "Oh, come, my dear sir! If Frayle didn't write it, who did?" He turned to the door again, but Oliver strolled past him and leaned negligently against it.

"Who, indeed? Here's something that may throw a little light on that point." He took out his pocket-book, extracted a document, and offered it to Mr. Lupin. The latter glanced at it, started violently, and uttered a sharp yelp of amazement.

"What's this? Morris, this is a receipt—for four hundred quid! Made out to Frayle and signed by you!"

The countenance of Mr. Morris, no longer bland, took on a yellowish pallor. He said nothing, but glanced round the room in a hunted manner.

"I don't get this," said Mr. Lupin foggily. "If this is Frayle's receipt, then why—and how the hell did *you* get hold of it, anyway?" He thrust a fierce finger at Oliver.

The calm voice of his daughter answered him. "Father, how can you be so dense? *He's* Mr. Frayle, of course."

This placid statement produced a notable sensation. Mr. Morris gasped audibly and fell back, directing a pop-eyed and horrified stare at Oliver. Mr. Lupin bounded in his chair and emitted choking noises. Oliver, smiling somewhat sheepishly, looked at Betty.

"That's so," he admitted. "I'm Oliver Frayle. How did you know?"

"Because your photograph was on another page of the same paper that announced your arrival. Father didn't notice it, but I recognised you almost at once. I didn't say anything, because I couldn't make out what you were—well, playing at."

Oliver grinned. "And I didn't give you my full name because I couldn't make out what *you* were—well, playing at. You see, Mr. Lupin, I was on my way here when I met you and Mr. Perks. Before I had a chance to mention my name, I heard you calling me a scoundrel and—er—talking about my blood-vessels. I couldn't remember having done anything particularly villainous, so I thought I'd lie low for a bit and find out what was wrong."

"My sainted Sam!" said Mr. Lupin faintly. "D'you mean to say I've been blackguarding you and—— But look here, I still don't understand. Morris—by gum, he's bolted!"

He had. While making his explanation,



Oliver had unwittingly moved away from the door; Mr. Morris, taking prompt advantage of this opportunity and of the fact that the general attention was temporarily diverted from himself, had, as it were, folded his tent and silently stolen away. There drifted back to them at this point the distant slam of the hall door.

"I've met his kind before," said Oliver. "I'm afraid you'll find he's been swindling you from the start, Mr. Lupin. It was rather rash of him to forge that letter and invent that bright little yarn about my refusing to pay more than half the price, but I guess he thought I was too far away to be dangerous. He had to send me the receipt to keep me quiet, of course. I dare say he's got into some other trouble and wanted to raise all he could and clear out. Hence his New York trip."

"Mean to say you sent him the four hundred and he stuck to half of it?" said Mr. Lupin feebly. He sank back in his chair, for the first time in his life at a loss for words suitable to the occasion; it was plain that he needed time to readjust his scattered beliefs. Oliver glanced at Betty. That young lady moved across the room and patted her parent's head consolingly.

"Brace up, old man," she exhorted him. "You ought to thank Mr. Frayle for showing up Mr. Morris. He might have gone on swindling you for years. And I certainly think you ought to apologise to Mr. Frayle for asking him to thrash himself."

Mr. Lupin sat up, a wide grin dawning behind his beard. His volatile nature clearly would not allow him to remain depressed for long.

"Ha! So I did! That's good. And, anyway, Morris didn't get the money he came for to-day, so it might be worse. Look here, Frayle, I take back all I said about you."

"Thanks," said Oliver meekly.

"Consider it unsaid," urged Mr. Lupin handsomely, "and stop to tea. And to supper, if there's enough left from lunch. I've cursed you so hard and so often that I feel you're almost one of the family. Ha!"

Oliver turned and looked deliberately at Betty, who sustained his gaze gallantly for a moment and then turned away rather hurriedly.

"I hope," said Oliver slowly, "that you'll encourage that feeling."

And, as it subsequently transpired, they had to.

## THE DANCERS.

**I SAW a group of foxgloves  
Dancing in the breeze,  
This way, that way,  
Underneath the trees.**

**With every wind a-swaying,  
I watched them bend and swing,  
As children at their playing  
Within a merry ring.**

**I passed, and thought forgotten  
The foxgloves all a-sway;  
Dull cares by work begotten  
Enslaved me night and day.**

**But suddenly, when dreary  
Beyond life's sombre way,  
Across my vision weary  
Flashed foxgloves at their play.**

EDITH DART.





"The memory of recent disasters hung heavy on the minds of Tibulle and Aristide as they plodded side by side along the straight dusty road beyond Guyancourt."

# THE DOWRY

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY EMILE VERPILLEUX

THEY stopped at Guyancourt to water the horses, and there Aristide came up to Tibulle. "She has been crying again," he said. "Her eyes are red with tears."

Tibulle shook his head and at the same time shrugged his shoulders, in a vain attempt to appear undisturbed. Aristide, perhaps because he was an uncle, while Tibulle was only a father, made no attempt to conceal his feelings. "It is time, my brother," he said, "it is certainly time that we came to a decision."

"And what about Gogo?" asked Tibulle.

"Of course Gogo must be considered," agreed his brother.

Leaving aside that of the tramp, hobo, or *chemineau*, as you may prefer to call him, there is no pleasanter life in its essentials than that of the travelling showman, and no country better adapted to it than is

France. For everyone likes travelling, and at the same time everyone likes staying at home, and he (the snail also, of course) alone takes his home with him on his travels. And whereas in less favoured countries he has the winter to think of and other inclemencies, in France life is to him an eternal summer, for, as the sun creeps through the heavens, so he creeps with it along the straight white roads between the poplars from town to town and fair to fair, going southwards with the swallows as winter grips the north, and northward again as the pleasant springtime returns to the fields of Picardy and the meadows of the Manche. Best of all, he does not go alone, but takes his friends with him and his family. (His enemies, also, of course, which is the one drawback.) For, supposing you are the proprietor of an errant *carrousel*—or, as we should have it, merry-go-round



—you may continue the conversation that was cut short by the closing of, let us say, the Fair of the Lion of Belfort, next week at the Fair of St. Cloud or the Fair of Sceaux, and so on and so forth until eternity. It really is eternity so far as this finite earth is concerned, because although you may die and your descendants, yet the fair will continue, with its *carrousels* and its shooting booths, and its tombolas and its swing boats, and its performing animals and its Hômes of Oriental Mystery, and the same caravan will anchor in Avignon in exactly the same relation to its fellows as it did on the Boulevard Arago, and your families may be friends and neighbours for a hundred years without ever settling down together for more than a week in any one spot. From all of which it might have been supposed that Aristide and Tibulle and Gogo and, of course, Marguerite would be very happy people indeed.

Unfortunately Marguerite did not like *la vie foraine*.

It was not really her fault. The whole trouble began somewhere about the beginning of the last century, when Tibulle's grandfather—also Tibulle, Tibulle Debry, proprietor of the Cirque Debry, to give him his full rank—took to himself a wife of *bourgeoise* stock. Thitherto the Cirque Debry had been of unimpaired descent. For certainly one century, and by repute for three, though there was no documentary evidence to prove it, the Cirque Debry had followed the sun until in half the towns of France it was as authentic an historic monument as the church tower itself. It was said, and there was no particular reason to disbelieve it, that the future Emperor Napoleon, when he was an artillery cadet at Brienne, was a patron of the cheaper seats. It is certain that in the later days of the Citizen King the widow Debry, mother of Tibulle and Aristide, cherished visions—it is true that they came to nothing—of establishing a permanent footing in the Champs Elysées and of rivalling Franconi himself. Unfortunately by that ancestral *mésalliance* the seeds of dissolution were already sown. They first reared their heads when Tibulle, fifth of the name, on succeeding to his heritage, at once removed his motherless little daughter from her natural surroundings and sent her to the Convent of the Seven Sorrows in the Rue Cailloux in Paris, to be brought up after the manner of the *bourgeoise*. This he did in defiance of public opinion

and all respectable tradition. But, as the shoulder shruggers would put it, there was always something strange about Tibulle, and although a good fellow enough, nothing good was to be hoped from him. They proved true prophets, alas, for almost from the beginning of his rule the Cirque Debry began the descent from the high point to which it had been raised by his energetic mother, so that year by year it dwindled, and first the trained animals went, and then the Arabian steeds, and then the performing clowns, and each succeeding season lopped a caravan from the procession along the high-road, until, to cut a long story short, after fifteen years the Cirque had shrunk until it was no more than the *carrousel*, though still dignified by the title of *manège*, and of the eighteen caravans which had once proudly paraded the pleasant land of France, but two were left, with four ancient horses.

The memory of recent disasters hung heavy on the minds of Tibulle and Aristide as they plodded side by side along the straight dusty road beyond Guyancourt. There had been swing boats; not three months before they were seized by creditors at Courbevoie, of infamous memory. For a like reason the Shooting Gallery of the Two Americas was left behind at Buc-en-Brives. Worst of all, the traction engine which for fifty years at least provided both power and melody, which dragged the *carrousel* along the roads by day and revolved it by night, and hissed triumphant melody through the pipes of the steam-organ, even that was gone, and old Pégase, most ancient and enduring of white steeds, must take its place, however inefficiently, while Gogo, last human relic of the staff, ground dismally upon a hand organ.

And now, as climax, here was Marguerite with her eyelids red with tears.

For Tibulle the cruellest thing was the realisation that it was his own fault and no one else's. Had he not wilfully and madly sent Marguerite to the convent school, she would never have met Hector. And if she had never met Hector, she would almost certainly have accepted the heart of young Dumollet, owner of the Home of Oriental Mystery, who was so devoted to her that he would gladly marry her without any dowry at all, and if not his, that, at least, of some other of the innumerable admirers who were part and parcel of the moving world in which they lived. As things were, Marguerite loved Hector, and Hector



adored Marguerite, and Hector's mother, who was of the higher *bourgeoisie*, and owned an important manufactory of glass beads and trimmings in the Rue Mouffetard on the Left Bank, would certainly never agree to the marriage were any sum less than ten thousand francs mentioned as the dowry of a daughter-in-law. Almost as certainly she would reject the daughter of a travelling showman, whatever her dowry; but Hector, maddened by the shafts of Eros, had kept the fatal secret from her, referring always to Monsieur Tibulle Debry as a *rentier* living on his income, and not remotely connected with the well-known mustard firm of that name in Dijon. And now Marguerite, stricken with the pangs of love, was mutely crying for the intervention of a Providence that showed no signs of moving. Altogether, as Tibulle and Aristide tramped side by side, the outlook was of the worst, and that just at the time of all times when the weather threatened rain, and the Foire at Chateaublanc, whither they were bound, promised to prove disastrous.

Had you met the two old brothers as they walked, their heads sunk between their shoulders in an extremity of desolation, you would have taken them for anything but what they were. They wore shabby black coats and shabbier trousers, and their old faces were seamed and weather-lined like apples in a cider store. There was not an inch between them in height or girth or in the grizzled roughness of their abundant hair. They were indeed twins, their one salient distinction that Aristide still displayed the thick bristling moustache of the old days, when he was famous from Dunkerque to Aiguesmortes as Brancador, the Dompteur, trainer of the Most Savage Wild Beasts, until the unhappy day when a Royal Tiger of Bengal, which had forgotten to take its sleeping draught before the performance, mauled him at Nantes and broke his nerve for good. But even he, in his shabby black clothes, looked more like an undertaker who took his duties seriously than one whose life was passed among the high lights and gaieties of provincial fairs.

"Ten thousand francs!" said Tibulle tragically. "It is a fortune. And you say that she weeps."

"She must have cried all night," agreed Aristide. "Her eyes—it is impossible to say how red they are." Indeed, when ten minutes later she came out of the little back caravan, with the neat window curtains, that was their travelling home, even the

blindest bat in the old church tower of Montluc, which they were passing, though dazzled by the brightest sunlight, could have told that Marguerite was very unhappy indeed.

They tell us that tears are a weapon. The tears of Marguerite were certainly a spur, for when, some half an hour later, the two old brothers resumed their places beside the drooping white head of old Pégase, their faces were full of a great decision, of one so jointly come by that they did not even need to speak of it to each other. Instead, Tibulle, turning, waved mutely to old Auguste—who was plodding behind them beside the cart that bore the trestles—to come up with them. And when he came, without any previous word, Tibulle it was who said to him: "Gogo, we have decided."

Gogo resembled his masters as far as it is proper in one of inferior rank—that is to say that he resembled them exactly in everything but that he was a little older and a little smaller and a little more wrinkled, and his black coat a little more shabby. He walked with the same plodding gait, with his tousled grey head sunk at the same angle between his shoulders, and when he spoke his voice had exactly the same inflection.

He shook his head doubtfully. "She will never permit it," he said.

"She will know nothing of it until it is too late to refuse," said Tibulle.

"We will talk with Gauguenard at Sceaux to-night," said Aristide. "He will agree with eagerness."

"And to-morrow morning I will visit Madame Lelong, at her manufactory in the Rue Mouffetard, and make the necessary offer."

"Even so," objected Gogo, "Mam'selle will be broken-hearted if she should hear of it. It would be better—yes, it would be very much better to tell her—why, yes, to tell her that Monsieur Aristide—or, no, still better, that Monsieur Tibulle—has all his life been a great miser, saving here a sou and there a sou, and putting it always aside until the time that it should be needed for her dowry, and, in a word, that now the time has come."

"She might not believe," objected Aristide.

"She will be too happy to think of it," insisted Gogo.

"Let us tell her at once," said Aristide, "that her eyes may become less red. But



first there is something else to be said. What of yourself, my ancient ? ”

Auguste shrugged his shoulders determinedly. “ I have served with you for fifty years,” he said. “ We have seen good fortune and ill together. It is the first time that I have heard that my fortunes are different from those of the Manège Debry.”

“ But——” began Tibulle.

Aristide, as it were, elbowed him aside, though only by a gesture. “ Forgive us, my friend,” he said. And the three old gentlemen shook hands very solemnly.

“ And now,” said Gogo, with a sigh of what might have been relief, “ you will tell her.” And, without waiting for instructions, he turned and hobbled back to the little green caravan with the bright window curtains.

“ My very dear daughter,” said Tibulle, when a moment later Marguerite caught up with them, her dimmed eyes already brightened with curious hope, “ we have been talking together, Aristide and I, and we have decided that this Hector of yours is a young man who may with confidence be accepted into our family. Stay ! ” For new tears were welling into the girl’s eyes, though from a different source. “ Do not rejoice too soon—we have yet to come to our final decision. At least, it rests with the young man himself. He is to come, you say, to Sceaux to-night.”

“ He will be already there in the *marketé* when we arrive,” said the girl. “ He was to catch a train from Paris which should bring him there before seven. He will be sitting on the second bench——”

“ It will be for him to present himself to us,” said Tibulle with dignity. “ We will examine him, my brother and I, and if we think that he is worthy, you need have no fear that matters will be arranged.”

Certainly Marguerite would make a very excellent wife for any *bourgeois*, even of the highest. Looking at her, Tibulle and Aristide were agreed about that, for in truth there is always a certain—a certain I-know-not-what, as we have it in France—which distinguishes those who live upon the high-roads from those who dwell in the main streets. It is not a boldness, nor a lack of restraint, it is no matter fundamentally of breeding or of carriage or of caste, only there is a something which marks out rightful heirs of the high-road from their town-dwelling sisters. And Marguerite Debry was altogether lacking in it. From

the top of her golden-brown mane, decorously twined around her head, to the tip of her high-heeled shoe, she was in everything town-bred. It would have surprised you, as it had surprised many, to see her in the caravan ; it would never have occurred to you to wonder were she pointed out to you as the cashier, even perhaps the manager, of the most flourishing business in the Rue Mouffetard. Even there was a certain sternness, a directness in the poise of her small head and the set of her lips, which indicated that, did M. Hector Lelong prove lacking in business ability when his time should come to inherit the business in the Rue Mouffetard, he would have at least one counsellor and adviser perfectly qualified to come to any business decisions which might be necessary to its welfare. But, of course, the old gentlemen did not see all this. She was to them mainly an idea—an idea which most men, as they grow older, have of their women-folk, an idea to be cherished and protected, a something for which sacrifices are to be made. (I am talking of nice old men, of course.)

Hector, salvaged from his *berce* in the market-place, passed his examination so satisfactorily that upon the following morning, just before Madame Veuve Lelong quitted her directorial throne in the Rue Mouffetard for the two hours’ interval which every good Frenchman and Frenchwoman devotes to the grave business of lunch, two ancient gentlemen waited upon her. They were dressed in the best style of the higher *bourgeoisie*, in well-brushed black coats that were not too new to suggest frivolity, nor too old to hint at lack of means. One of them wore in his buttonhole the purple ribbon of the Order of Agricultural Merit, and their names were Monsieur Tibulle Debry of Dijon and his brother, Monsieur Aristide. They were introduced by Monsieur Hector Lelong—a pale youth, tall and not ill-looking, with hair brushed back from his forehead after the fashion decreed by M. Georges Carpentier—who was, however, so impressed by the importance of the occasion, and so bashful withal that, having completed the introduction, he was impelled to cast himself upon a sofa, the sofa upon which Madame Lelong occasionally, when stress of business permitted, took her postprandial siesta, and there speechlessly bury his burning face in a convenient cushion.

Actually, both parties being well-disposed, the matter was not difficult to arrange.



Madame Lelong was favourably impressed by the respectable appearance of her visitors. The name of Debry was one well known to her, and that her visitors smilingly dismissed the suggestion that they were interested in the famous mustard firm disturbed her no wit, for she knew beforehand that her Hector had met their Marguerite at the house of her second cousin on the paternal side, of whose daughter she had become the bosom friend while both were pupils at the Convent School of the Seven Sorrows in the Rue Cailloux. It being a matter of true love, which is, after all, important, and there being no discrepancy of rank or fortune between the high contracting parties, remained only to fix the amount of the dowry. Here, indeed, some difficulties began, for while Madame Lelong set a high value, to the extent at least of twenty-five thousand francs, upon her son as a potential husband, the cautious *rentier* from Dijon valued his daughter, if possible, even more highly, setting forth her perfections physical and mental, culinary and cultural, with such an eloquence that even Madame Lelong was impressed—not sufficiently impressed, indeed, to accept his thesis that five thousand francs would be a sufficient sum, but at least to knock five thousand off her own valuation and to agree to a mere twenty thousand. At that point the battle joined, so that from the vociferation and the despairing gesture on either side a mere outsider would have deemed agreement hopeless. So, indeed, it might have been, for when Monsieur Tibulle had by slow stages reached eight thousand francs, Madame Lelong was still hovering in the neighbourhood of fifteen. But at the critical moment, when negotiations seemed on the point of being broken off—deceitfully, indeed, for neither party wished it—Monsieur Hector Lelong, rising from his sofa, cast himself upon his knees before his mother's chair, exclaiming woefully: "Oh, *ma mère, ma mère*, I love her so, I cannot live without her!"

Whereat Madame Lelong, who, like all French mothers, while preserving the semblance of tyranny, was at heart her son's obedient slave, was so shaken that she cast away two thousand francs as though it were nothing at all, and within ten minutes the bargain was completed at ten thousand francs, the trousseau, and a full set of household linen, while Madame Lelong, for her part—and from this you may judge that she was really the most generous of women

—declared her intention to present to the young couple the Villa Mon Espoir, then being built on the Lôtissement of the Haras, in the pleasant suburb of Viroflay, with all necessary furnishings and equipment. Whereat Monsieur Aristide Debry, who, in his capacity of uncle, had acted merely as sponge-holder or referee, was so impressed that he declared his intention to donate as his share of the dowry the entire cost of the wedding breakfast and the subsequent visit to Robinson.

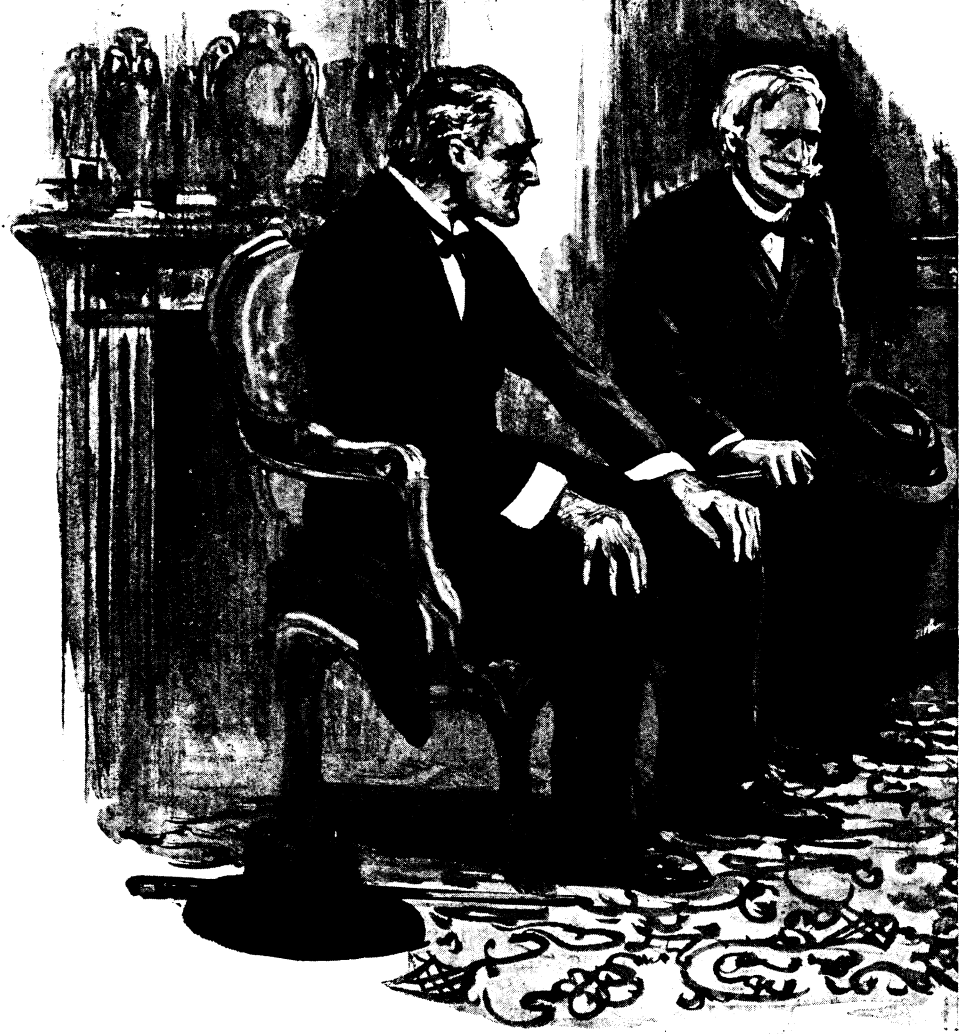
This was all very satisfactory—so satisfactory, indeed, that at the close of the visit M. Hector Lelong was impelled to fling his arms consecutively about the necks of the two MM. Debry and, under the stress of emotion, to assure each in turn that he would devote the rest of his life to showing him the devotion of a son. But it was a different matter when, having departed amid a cloud of compliments, Tibulle and Aristide made their way slowly and on foot towards the railway station at the corner of the Boulevard Montparnasse, on their way back to Sceaux. It is true that, being alike philosophers, they agreed that it was useless to despair until they had seen Gogo. For in the stress of affairs they had left to Gogo the task of negotiating the sale of what was left of the Manège Debry with M. Hippolyte Gauguenard, proprietor of the Cirque Duplessis, a long-time neighbour, who had for months past expressed his willingness to make a deal for what was left of the past glories of the House of Debry. Gogo had been empowered to commence negotiations on a basis of twenty thousand francs, and be it remembered twenty thousand francs are still worth exactly twenty thousand francs to a Frenchman, whatever they may mean to a perfidious foreigner in these days of depreciated exchanges. In reply to this, it was certain that M. Hippolyte would make the appropriate counter offer of five thousand francs. All then depended upon Gogo, for if he so far prevailed as to raise the average to, say, twelve thousand five hundred, all might be well. But if he failed, and the final bargain was for no more than ten thousand, disaster threatened. For with a dowry of ten thousand, and the cost of the trousseau, and the hire of the motor *char-à-bancs*, which is essential to all weddings of the real *bourgeoisie*—and out came the notebooks, and in the dim illumination of the execrable third-class carriage (since the War all third-class carriages in France have been execrable) intricate



calculations were embarked upon that lasted all the hour of the journey without coming within even measurable distance of any solution.

For once in his life the luck of Tibulle failed him. Which is to say that Gogo, waiting outside the barrier—being too true a Frenchman to

had agreed to give twelve thousand five hundred francs for the Manège Debry as it stood, horses, caravans, pigs and cows—these latter being not livestock, but the *papier-mâché* incidentals of the merry-go-round. He had agreed further—and this was, perhaps, Gogo's greater victory—to pay over the agreed amount



"When Monsieur Tibulle had by slow stages reached eight thousand francs, Madame Lelong was still hovering in the neighbourhood of fifteen."

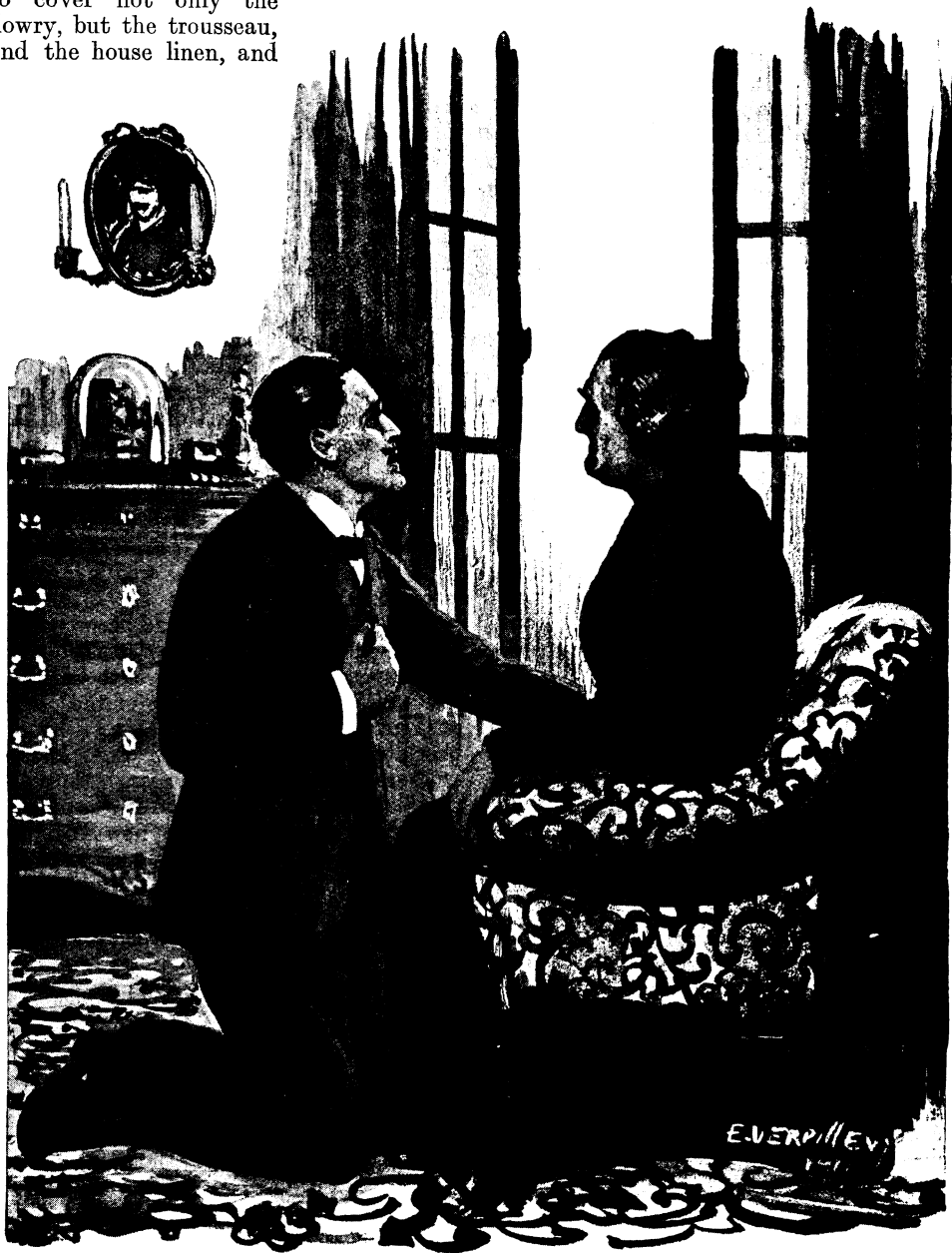
consider paying twenty centimes for a platform ticket—was radiant with success. Everything was settled. M. Gauguenard

at once, after the due exchange of signatures, well understood, and to say nothing of the deal until at least three days after the



religious marriage of Mademoiselle Marguerite Debry to M. Hector Lelong, of the Rue Mouffetard. And twelve thousand five hundred francs was amply sufficient to cover not only the dowry, but the trousseau, and the house linen, and

done their duty, for very nearly the last time, to the *papier-mâché* pigs and the cows with the gilded horns—than they had for any night during the three months since



“Oh, *ma mère, ma mère*, I love her so, I cannot live without her!”

the wedding feast, and the hire of the motor *char-à-bancs*. And in the event M. Aristide and M. Tibulle and plain Gogo slept, perhaps, better that night—after having

Marguerite had begun to weep in secret. And the next day they were able, all three of them—for the Fair of Sceaux does not begin its business until the evening—to keep



the rendezvous with Madame and M. Hector Lelong at the office of M. Duvernoy, the notary in the Rue Taitbout, and there to sign the necessary documents and to make the necessary deposits, and afterwards to make the due arrangements for a wedding that should be worthy of such contracting parties.

A wedding it proved to be that did honour alike to the Rue Mouffetard and to the good city of Dijon. For not only was the religious ceremony carried out in the fashionable church of Saint Pierre of the Recollets, not only did several of the invited guests appear in all the glory of white neckties and coats of ceremony, not only was the bride by general acclamation the most beautiful upon whom the sun ever shone and the bridegroom, if a trifle embarrassed by his tight white gloves, all that could be expected of so subordinate an actor, his mother magnificent in purple velvet, and the bride's father the very image of a venerable banker at the least—above all, there was the *char-à-bancs*. Now, since the old days before motors were, when it was essential for the wedding-party to drive solemnly round and round the Bois de Boulogne in open landaus, things have changed greatly. Your whole array embarks in the one great vehicle, and your wedding feast, instead of being set out in some urban restaurant, more often seeks a rural setting. So it was with the wedding feast of Marguerite Lelong (*née* Debry). The *char-à-bancs* being constructed expressly for such ends, was of a gorgeous rose colour, with silver fittings, and was ornamented with cupidons and true lovers' knots. It was decorated at all available points with white favours, and when everyone had taken their seats, the bride and bridegroom, in bridal array, on the front seat, supported by their respective parents, while the invited guests, in order of rank and consanguinity, filled the rest of the vehicle, to the number of thirty-two, smiling determinedly, what time the photographer took his inevitable record of the scene, the proud heart of Madame Veuve Lelong might well feel that life had no greater glory left to offer.

M. Debry, everyone was agreed, knew what was what, and to an evidently deep purse added the most perfect taste. When Robinson was reached—and everyone knows that Robinson is, of all the rural retreats round Paris, the aptest for a really important marriage feast—there was the noblest of repasts awaiting them in the very biggest

tree-top of the Restaurant of the Really Authentic Robinson. For be it known to those who have never been there, that the great glory of Robinson is that it is entirely made up of eating-houses, and the great glory of the eating-houses is that each and every one of them boasts of a large tree with a platform set in its branches as a dining place, after the fashion one must suppose originated by the immortal Crusoe, and that accordingly each and every one of them is enabled truthfully to declare that it is the Real and only Genuine Robinson—and to charge accordingly.

It was a very merry meal indeed, with everyone laughing and cheering and drinking toasts all at once, and it was observed by all that the two MM. Debry and their venerable friend M. Auguste Thibayrenque were among the gayest of the gay. As, indeed, why should they not have been, with a beloved daughter so happily and suitably bestowed. Actually their greatest moment was to come later, quite late in the evening, when the *char-à-bancs* had gone home to bed, and the wedding guests were departed, and only the three old gentlemen and the widow had accompanied the newly-married pair, by taxi-cab, at vast expense, you may believe, to the little new villa in the Lötissement of the Haras at Viroflay, which had been solemnly presented to them by the bridegroom's mother. It was a very new little villa, standing in an ocean of mud in the middle of a field just devoted to new building, and its walls were still shining with damp, and its furniture was even newer than the walls, if that were possible, but to its first tenants it seemed a very bower. Then came the leave-takings, and everyone wept very happily, and as though to signify that the ceremony was at an end, Madame Veuve Lelong decided to return to Paris by tramcar, and the three old gentlemen escorted her to it through the mud, leaving the young lovers to their happiness.

It was when Madame Lelong had been safely placed on board, and the fiery monster again dashed off through the darkness Parisward, that Aristide turned to Tibulle. "It has been the greatest day in our lives, my brother," he said, and they all solemnly took hands.

"Especially I am happy," agreed Tibulle, "that we have in no way deceived that excellent woman Madame Veuve Lelong.



She believes that I am a *rentier*, and have no connection with the show business, and it is perfectly true."

For a moment Auguste looked serious. "I fear that there can be little left of the price M. Gauguenard has paid, handsome though it was."

Tibulle shrugged his shoulders. "I have still three hundred francs," he said. "It is a fortune for three old men."

They turned towards where the glare of the Paris lights showed in the eastern sky, and arm-in-arm plodded towards them through the night.



## COMPANIONED.

**A**MONG the folk who jostle me  
In crowded ways by day or night  
Are some that strangers cannot see,  
Though to my eyes their eyes are bright.

We pass, but speak not, meet and make  
No sign; yet recognition lies,  
At each familiar turn I take,  
In someone's unforgotten eyes.

Nor are these friends to sight alone  
Apparent, when I thrill to feel  
An arm linked lightly in my own,  
A silent foot beside me steal.

One whom a grave 'neath tropic trees  
Hides, and another long since lost  
Under Antipodean seas.  
My steps have dogged, my path have crossed.

And one who was, and was not, mine,  
Now as to shun me glides before,  
Now lightly follows: yet no sign  
May pass between us any more.

These friends are mine: nought else doth live.  
The loud, harsh world about me fades,  
A shadow faint and fugitive—  
And I a shade among these shades.

MICHAEL WILSON.





“ ‘Really, Captain Lambton, if I had known that your views were quite so obsolete——’  
 ‘Common-sense is never out of fashion,’ he retorted briskly, ‘and what you propose to  
 do is just a piece of folly.’ ”

# MISS MODERNITY

By MARJORIE BOWEN

*Author of "The Presence and the Power," "Stinging Nettles," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY COLLER

ELIZABETH WHARTON had every inducement to be modern and efficient; she had an active mind, three hundred a year, no responsibilities, a good education, and naturally, as an outcome of all these things, a fairly complete self-assurance. Of course she had not had very much experience, for she was only twenty-three, but she rather despised experience, and she was exceptionally well armed with theories.

Her mother had recently married again and gone to America, and Elizabeth lived with a friend of the same type in rooms, that were fairly cheap and decidedly picturesque, somewhere off the Fulham Road. Elizabeth was studying for the Bar;

she had, in fact, only one more examination before her, and she looked on this as an expert rider looks upon the last fence to be leapt before certain victory.

Elizabeth was quite happy in her fairly complete self-assurance; she was young, healthy, and very much in earnest, and though she wore glasses and shingled hair, she had a certain satisfaction—unconscious, perhaps—in the exquisite cut of her one-piece serge frocks, in the perfection of her pale silk stockings, and the gleam of her openwork patent-leather shoes.

If she had not been an efficient young woman, she would have been a pretty young girl, for she did not really need glasses—they were just part of her kit, like an



officer's epaulettes—and her hair was the kind that wanted so hard to be long and curly that she had to crop it every week.

Her friend, Connie Smeeton, firmly supported her in her attitude towards life, for Connie could never have been charming. If she had not been efficient, she would have been merely dull and perhaps disagreeable. She intended to be an engineer, and she was a little plain and more than a little dowdy.

Connie was always slightly apprehensive lest Elizabeth should, in some moment of aberration, spoil her career and betray her standard by marriage. "If only you don't fall in love——" she would say, with a sigh.

At which Elizabeth would be serenely amused. Elizabeth knew all about love; she had read quite a number of scientific works on the subject. Marriage she regarded as a pitiful survival of the Middle Ages, all very well, perhaps, for ordinary stupid women, but for anyone like herself or Connie——

"Falling in love," said Elizabeth, "is the last folly of an idle, ill-educated mind feebly searching for diversion, and marriage is the last refuge of all the women who are not any good for anything else."

And then Elizabeth came into a fortune, a real fortune; it was left her by an uncle who had quarrelled with her entirely over her choice of a "career." The old tyrant had actually wanted her to live with him, to pour out his coffee in the morning, his tea in the afternoon, and play cribbage in the evening. On her indignant refusal, he had called her "a hard young fool," but now he had died and left her all he possessed on condition that she managed the property herself and took up residence in the old Manor House; also everything was to go to a distant relation if and when she married.

Elizabeth cried secretly. If the old man had been reasonable, she would have liked him, and she had always fostered the hope that one day she would both startle and win him by some sparkling forensic display when she was a full-fledged barrister.

"Of course it is a challenge," remarked Connie. "The old idiot thought you would make a mess of everything, and that would teach you a lesson."

"I suppose so," returned Elizabeth dubiously. "Poor dear, he was such a hopeless reactionary. I don't think I'll accept; it just means smashing up my life-

work," she added with the air of forty-five at least.

But Connie was a shrewd young person. She said: "Elizabeth, you know that you've only got three hundred, and it's really an awful pinch, even the two of us living like this. It is no use just being stiff-necked. You might find a life-work in looking after this place."

"Oh, yes," agreed Elizabeth. "Poor Uncle Joshua ran everything in the most archaic fashion. The place must be chaotic. And of course I know a great deal about property administration, estate work, and model farming."

"Well," replied Connie, who for a long time had seen little prospect of earning either fame or money at engineering, "I think you ought to take this on; it seems, in a way, your job. I can come with you for a bit," she added generously, "to give you moral support."

Elizabeth thanked her, but declared that she was in absolutely no need of moral support, so Connie had to offer her company on the usual terms of a mere guest.

With a great deal of weight and gravity Elizabeth threw herself into her new task. The lawyers informed her of a codicil to the will which gave her a good deal of annoyance. Herein her uncle expressed his wish that she should employ as her bailiff or steward a certain Captain Harry Lambton, who was greatly in need of such a position.

"But suppose the man isn't efficient?" asked Elizabeth.

"Oh, I believe there is no doubt about that, Miss Wharton. Captain Lambton has been farming on his own near Crofton."

"Then why didn't my uncle employ him himself?" asked Elizabeth crisply.

"Ah, well, Mr. Wharton always liked to do everything himself, you know."

"So shall I," replied Elizabeth. "I intend to take complete charge of everything."

"Quite so, quite so," agreed the impassive lawyer. "This is a mere suggestion on the part of the late Mr. Wharton, a mere suggestion."

Elizabeth told Connie about it, and Connie thought that Captain Harry Lambton ought to be interviewed, so Elizabeth wrote to him and asked him to call on her soon after her arrival at Crofts.

"But I know what he is like," she told Connie, with the cruelty of her self-assured youth. "Some poor war derelict that one



can't help being sorry for, but doesn't want. I suppose he is eking out a pension on a poultry farm."

Elizabeth interviewed Captain Lambton in the large terrace room at Crofts. After the rooms off the Fulham Road, Crofts seemed very large, lofty, and noble. Just at first Elizabeth's composure was a trifle ruffled; she thought that the reflection of herself in the big mirrors showed a creature rather out of place in the grand old house. Somehow that boyish-looking figure with the close aureole of fair hair, in the straight tube frock and the narrow watered silk bow at the throat, did not look quite like that of the mistress of Crofts Manor House.

Realising this, Elizabeth was extraordinarily dignified with Captain Lambton. She put him through his paces with swift precision, and this despite the fact that her heart was discomposingly softened by his very obvious lameness and his very gay and gallant demeanour.

He was a man of about thirty-eight. Very ordinary, Elizabeth told herself quickly—oh, yes, a very ordinary type indeed. Eton, Oxford, the Guards, the War, a poultry farm. He had brown hair with a wave, and a plain, humorous face. He seemed extremely good-natured, and his manner was courteously casual; yet he, too, somehow seemed sure of himself.

"I'm afraid you'll find me thoroughly mid-Victorian, Miss Wharton," he said. "I'm one of the fellows who've rather been left behind in the ditch while progress goes by on the high-road."

"You mean you are one of those who cling to the wheels instead of getting into the cart," said Elizabeth cleverly. "Personally, I'm a great believer, I'm afraid, in efficiency."

"Oh, that! I saw too much of that in the late troubles to be awfully keen," smiled Harry Lambton. He glanced at the slight boyish Elizabeth, and added: "But of course that was all before your time. I dare say efficiency is quite a new game to you, Miss Wharton."

Elizabeth considered this impertinence, but she smiled sweetly to show that it was the impertinence one can condone in an inferior. She was exasperated.

But she engaged Captain Lambton. She was further exasperated when he himself suggested that the salary she offered was far too high, but she coldly agreed to the figure he named, inwardly raging lest he should think it was ignorance that had

prompted the extravagance of her first proposal. She was so far from grace that she would rather he had thought it what it really was—an effort of charity.

For Harry Lambton had been quite devastatingly honest about his position. There was an unmarried sister, a younger brother, a married sister none too well off, none trained or "efficient."

"Translating and fancy leather work," he had said, and Elizabeth's fine lip had curled. Hence her munificent offer, and hence, on his rejection of this, her remark, resulting from an inward smart: "I thought that was what you wanted the job for?"

"Of course it's for the money I'm taking the place," he assured her cheerfully.

"It could hardly be for anything else," replied Elizabeth unpleasantly. "I know you are the kind of man to hate working under a woman."

He looked at her quizzically. "Well, now, do you know, I never think of it like that," he smiled. "I suppose because these very efficient modern women don't quite seem to me feminine, one thinks of them as——"

"Freaks?" finished Elizabeth sharply, with a blush that annoyed her intensely. "Well, I am one of them, Captain Lambton. I don't wish you to regard me as anything—feminine."

"I should never dream of taking such a liberty," he answered her gravely.

"I am probably," continued the lady rigidly, "a rather different type from any you have seen before."

"Oh, yes," he agreed. "The post-war flapper is out of date, isn't she? No, I have never had an intimate acquaintance with anyone of your generation."

Elizabeth cruelly seized her opportunity. "This will hardly be an intimate acquaintance, Captain Lambton. I hope it is completely understood that everything is entirely in my charge, and that you work under my orders?"

She was almost surprised herself to find how well she did it; it was the manner that she had long practised in secret as that she would use when rising to cross-examine the defendant.

She hoped that he writhed a little, but could not be sure. He merely answered: "Oh, quite!"

Connie said afterwards, "He is quite nice," as she might have spoken of a new dog. "But you'll need to keep him in his place—he has got no end of cheek."



"He won't dare show any to me," said Elizabeth severely. "And I must say I didn't notice any 'cheek.' Of course, Connie, if you make yourself cheap bandying jokes with him——"

There was a great deal to do at Crofts, and Elizabeth tackled so many reforms at once and with such swift zeal that she found herself uncomfortably occupied. It was incredibly more difficult to produce model farms, cottages, water-supply and drainage than she would have believed, and much more hopeless a task to start village clubs, recreation rooms, and playgrounds than would ever have occurred to her. Theory went to the wind in a thousand, thousand fragments.

"The amount of stupidity, prejudice, and ignorance that one has to combat!" exclaimed Elizabeth.

"Don't give up, dear, for a lot of duds," advised Connie, who was enjoying her stay at Crofts. "Every reformer has had these difficulties to contend with. Think of Joan of Arc, of Florence Nightingale!"

"Don't be an idiot," said Elizabeth sharply.

"Well," replied Connie, "if the whole thing is too much for you——"

"Nothing is too much for me. Of course I am enjoying the work. It just hurts me to think how much wrong thinking there is about." But, in spite of this valiant disclaimer, Elizabeth began to look very worried and fine-drawn and pale.

By now she was intensely unpopular, had quarrelled with most of her neighbours, and was on the verge of law-suits with two of them, besides being entangled in legal difficulties with the local Borough Council. Very few of the tenants and villagers had responded to her efforts on their behalf, and her many improvements seemed to raise more ridicule than praise. Besides, she had been on more than one occasion very notably "done" by crafty rogues who had played up to her ideas, and the estate was becoming unpleasantly burdened.

Elizabeth had discovered, not without bitterness, how much easier it is to manage three hundred a year than ten thousand, and how much more satisfactory to be a law unto a few rooms off the Fulham Road than to a big house, three villages, and many acres, a host of dependents, servants, workmen and acquaintances, all critical and some hostile.

"You've one comfort," said Connie cheerfully (Connie, after all, wasn't concerned

very much), "that Lambton man doesn't make a bore of himself. I should think he must be a sort of Robot. He doesn't appear to have two ideas in his head. Two? Not even one!"

"Captain Lambton," retorted Elizabeth acidly, "is doing exactly as I asked him, acting under me and offering no advice or suggestion."

The new steward was, indeed, keeping exactly to his bond. Elizabeth would never have admitted to anyone, not even to Connie, not even to herself, that she sometimes longed for him to throw aside his good-humoured composure and say or do—well, anything that showed some interest in her affairs. He was exactly what she had asked him to be—the perfect paid servant—and this exasperated Elizabeth very much.

She even, as she got deeper and deeper into difficulties, more and more disliked and opposed, more and more nerve-racked and anxious, tried to challenge Harry Lambton into crossing or criticising her will. She wanted him, really, as a whipping boy; the least word from him would have been the signal for a passionate defence of her own actions, a haughty exposition of her own ideals, a flagellation of his outworn creeds, provincial viewpoint and middle-class prejudice.

But he never gave her the chance. He took all she did for granted, and his cheerful "Right!" in reply to the most preposterous of her suggestions began to irritate her beyond endurance. She found herself casting about for something that would rouse Harry Lambton, some absolute dynamite of a proposal that would bring him out into the open.

Now here Connie came in useful. Connie had put in for the job of doing the village water-supply and drainage, which had gone hopelessly wrong. Elizabeth knew quite well that Connie was incapable of doing this work, and was secretly annoyed that she had had the cheek to ask, but she saw here a golden opportunity for exploding the calm of Captain Lambton.

On the first chance she intended to inform him that Connie had got the work in hand. So impatient was she that she telephoned him to come up to Crofts Manor House.

When she went down to meet him in the big terrace room, she found him gazing at a large picture of her great-great-grandmother that hung over the black-and-white marble mantelpiece.

"Isn't she jolly?" he said enthusiastic-



ally. "I think I fell in love with her the moment I saw her."

"I am having the picture removed," cut in Elizabeth. "It is rather a bad Winter-halter, and out of period with the room."



"But she is such a dear," persisted Harry Lambton. "She never could be out of period with anything."

Elizabeth glanced coldly at the painting, which represented a young woman in a white silk pelisse, with a large Leghorn straw bonnet, filled with blue flowers, that just showed the smooth bands of her fair hair. She wore a blue sarcenet gown, and carried a tiny little parasol with a heavy fringe. The fair smooth face was set in a smile of ideal sweetness.

"What a pity she can't come to life!" smiled Harry Lambton.

"She is the type you admire?" asked Elizabeth, adjusting her glasses. "A simpering, cloying doll?"

"I love her," he returned, unabashed. "Do you know that the whole kit is upstairs in the chest in the big bedroom? Mr. Wharton showed it to me. He used to regret that there was no woman nowadays with so small a waist and foot."

"'Great-great-grandmother come to life!' he exclaimed tenderly."



"I haven't had time for frivolities," said Elizabeth sweetly. "The costume is most unhygienic, isn't it?"

Then, turning her back on her great-great-grandmother and looking down at the formal bunch of papers in her hand, she sprung her mine.

"I'm really very bothered about this water and drainage question, and I've decided to put the work into the hands of my friend Miss Smeeton."

"Miss Smeeton?"

"She is a qualified engineer, you know," smiled Elizabeth, "and really first-class."

She had done it at last; his nice plain face lost the look of indifferent good humour and became perplexed, angry.

"You don't realise how serious it is," he said. "You've fooled enough already, Miss Wharton. You ought to have a first-class firm of engineers down at once——"

"My friend is a first-class engineer," interrupted Elizabeth.

"Nonsense!" he answered briskly. "Nonsense, Miss Wharton! This experiment will cost you thousands."

She had brought him to the attack now, her mine had drawn him from his fortress, and he was doing battle, foot and horse, in the open. Elizabeth was enjoying herself.

"Really, Captain Lambton, if I had known that your views were quite so obsolete——"

"Common-sense is never out of fashion,"



"Elizabeth dropped a curtsy and blushed.



he retorted briskly, "and what you propose to do is just a piece of folly."

"You know nothing whatever of Miss Smeeton's qualifications."

"Neither do you, Miss Wharton. But I know this, that if she is going to monkey about with this water and drainage, you'll get into serious trouble—worse than you're in now," he added, bringing up his heavy guns.

"Oh, you think I'm in trouble, do you?" She pounced on that, rather losing her icy self-control.

"I know you're in a nice old mess. Of course, it isn't part of my job to tell you so, but I can't allow this."

Elizabeth now swept her big artillery into action. "Oh, indeed! I suppose you forget that I am entirely my own mistress in the matter?"

"But you aren't," he assured her. "You've no right to start typhus in the place, and that is what it will be, if things aren't looked to soon. Sanitation is beastly difficult, and you ought to have left the people alone, unless you had a good scheme to offer. They're almost without water now, and there's a nasty feeling in the place. I suppose Miss Smeeton won't expect bouquets—won't mind a few stones?"

He looked so very angry and stern, as he said this, that Elizabeth surrendered, bag and baggage, and employed, curiously enough, feminine tactics.

"I think it is perfectly horrid of you to speak to me like that," she declared. "I can't think how you can be so unkind! You know that I have been doing my very best for the place."

The victor was not to be appeased by this white flag. "You've done your very worst," he said unkindly. "It would take ten years' work to put right the damage you'd have done if I hadn't kept my eye on things a bit."

This furred the white flag out of sight. "Oh, indeed!" cried Elizabeth furiously. "So you haven't been carrying out my orders?"

He gave her a disarming grin. "Well, some of them were too idiotic," he admitted, "and I thought if I could just keep things going for a bit until you found your feet—"

Elizabeth collapsed into one of the big tapestry chairs; she really couldn't hold herself upright any longer. So this was what had been behind his pleasant reserve,

his immovable good humour, his ready acquiescence! He had been treating her as a joke, as a little fool who had to "find her feet," perhaps—oh, very likely!—making a jest of her behind her back.

She had not been able to rest until she had probed behind his mask, and now that she had done so she was shattered by her knowledge. But she bore herself bravely. "How amusing!" she said in a voice that was almost steady. "I really thought you were serving me loyally, Captain Lambton. This discovery is very unpleasant."

"It was the best loyalty that I could think of," he answered simply.

"To make me a laughing stock by accepting my orders, then not executing them?"

"But no one knew," he said. "Of course you don't think that I told people? You jumped it out of me, you know. I never meant to tell you. I only just tried what I could to keep you out of a mess, and I'm afraid that I haven't been very successful."

Elizabeth sat still. She was trying hard to make an effort to compose something bitter, cutting, and conclusive with which to dismiss the wretched man; she wanted to be very dignified and not in the least agitated. But during the seconds that she was pulling herself together he upset all her calculations by an absurd remark.

He had been looking at her very intently, and he suddenly, in a different kind of voice, said: "What do you wear those glasses for? I'm sure your eyes are quite good. And without them you would be just like great-great-grandmother."

Elizabeth looked up, really furious, in quite a school girlish sort of way, but she contrived to cling to her woman-of-the-world manner.

"Really? I suppose that is your ideal woman, the soft, clinging type, all cotton-wool and toilet vinegar!"

"Oh, yes! I warned you that I didn't get on with efficient women, didn't I?" he said rather forlornly.

"You should not have tried," retorted Elizabeth, slightly mystified. "But I thought you did not admit I was efficient."

He smiled. "You efficient? Good Heavens, of course you aren't! That is why we have got on so well together. I thought from the first you were just great-great-grandmother over again."

Elizabeth rose. "I suppose you are trying to be funny," she said icily. "It is



so dreadfully out of date, that type of humour."

He protested. "I'm not joking, really. Every time I look at you I think of great-great-grandmother, and—and"—under her hostile stare he changed the end of his sentence—"how glad I should be if she came to life," he concluded feebly.

"A pity you didn't live in those days, Captain Lambton," said Elizabeth, "isn't it? And I'm afraid, after what has passed, that we can't possibly work together."

"Oh, of course, if that is how you feel about it——"

"I do most decidedly. It is against my principles to employ a man when there are so many women wanting work. I shall have in future a lady bailiff."

She had triumphed. There was no mistaking the dismay in Harry Lambton's nice face. Elizabeth underscored her triumph.

"She may have many faults, but she won't bore me by telling me she has fallen in love with my great-great-grandmother."

"Well, if I bore you——"

"I'm afraid you do." She smiled primly.

"I'll clear out, then, at once."

"I don't want you to go at once," said Elizabeth rather lamely. "I mean, not to put yourself to any inconvenience."

"Not in the least," he returned briskly. "Another chap is looking after my little place for me. I thought I should be back there before long."

Well, he went, and Elizabeth was quite free to do exactly as she liked.

The first thing she did was to quarrel with Connie. She told her that it was sheer cheek for her to have asked for the engineering job, and Connie, in a rage, went back to the rooms off the Fulham Road.

Then Elizabeth sat down and thought for quite a long while, and the result of her thinking was that she telephoned to the very firm of engineers Captain Lambton had mentioned in the first place, and asked them to send someone at once.

After that Elizabeth shut herself up in the estate office and tried to impress the clerks that she really knew something of what she was talking about. Curiously enough, she had left off wearing spectacles lately, and found that she could really see quite well without them.

Elizabeth was very lonely now, and she began to find her work dull and uninteresting. She interviewed a great many prospective lady bailiffs and secretaries, and disliked all of them. She invited

friends to stay with her, and quarrelled with all of them because they told her that she looked as if she wanted a change.

Once she took the light car out and, quite by accident, of course, ran across Harry Lambton's little farm; she even caught a glimpse of him working in his garden.

It wasn't in the least a model farm, but was rather old-fashioned and ordinary, yet it looked so cosy and comfortable, so peaceful and friendly, that Elizabeth drove home positively hating Crofts Manor House and the thousand complications that it stood for. When she got home she took a long, long look at great-great-grandmother.

Then she went upstairs to the big bedroom and looked in the oak chest, that hitherto she had resolutely refrained from opening. There were the white pelisse, the blue frock, the chip bonnet, the kid slippers and the tiny fringed parasol.

Elizabeth tried them on. She found that the slippers were *not* too large, and that she *could* lace her waist in to twenty-two inches, also that the poke bonnet was very becoming, and hid her "shingled" hair completely, showing only two smooth golden bands in front. It was surprising to see how exactly she, the modern efficient young woman, looked like the ethereal girl in the Winterhalter painting. Elizabeth felt a funny little thrill of gratification. She ran down stairs to look again at the portrait, and there, in front of it, was Harry Lambton.

He had seen a pathetic figure flying past in a light car, seen a wistful face turned towards him, and he had come over to Crofts as fast as a push-bike could bring him along, and entered unannounced.

"Great-great-grandmother come to life!" he exclaimed tenderly, as she stood in the doorway.

Elizabeth dropped a curtsy and blushed. Somehow in a pelisse and poke bonnet it was easy to curtsy and blush.

"Please, sir," she said in a small voice, "great-great-grandmamma has got into a horrid muddle, and hopes you'll be so kind as to help her a little."

"She knows I've always been in love with her," he answered. Then: "Oh, Elizabeth, why don't you cut it all and marry me? We should have enough to manage on. I know you'll lose Crofts, but please do, Elizabeth, *darling!*"

Elizabeth sailed to the hearth; she looked as lovely as the portrait that smiled above. "Wasn't Uncle Joshua a wise old dear?" she said.



# GOLFING TIPS AND GADGETS

By EDWARD RAY

EX-OPEN CHAMPION, BRITISH AND AMERICAN

*Photographs by Sport & General*

**B**Y your clubs shall you be known on whatever course you may set foot, and therefore perhaps I am right in giving away, in the very first place, a trade secret when I announce that if and when you go to a professional for a lesson he, probably without your knowing that he is doing so, silently surveys your clubs. They teach him to a huge extent what is your trouble in golf. That is why I would advise the long handicap man who is desirous of improving

his figures to make a confidant of the professional he goes to, almost as he would of his medical adviser, for, when all is said and done, golf is very often prescribed as a sort of cure. Therefore when you go to a professional be candid with him.

Many a time and oft have I been asked by the novice how many clubs are requisite in his case, and to that I have invariably replied that seven are the necessities. What are wanted are a driver, a brassie, a mashie,



TOP OF SWING.



an iron, a niblick and a putter. No need to worry thus early about spoon, mashie irons, etc. What you want is a good foundation for a good game, and in the list of seven clubs which I have here given you ought to have the said foundation. Perhaps, after some time has elapsed, it may dawn upon the young player that there is a something required which will fit in between the iron and the mashie, and again between the brassie and the spoon. Be you a tall and thin man, cut out all idea of heavy clubs, and should you be on the stout and short side, then abandon all thought of the wisp-like club. There ought to be a trifle of whippiness about the shafts of your clubs, but that "give" should be well within a foot of the club-head. Of course I am now referring to your two wooden clubs.

Now for the length and weight. An average man requires wooden clubs measuring about forty-two inches and weighing about two ounces short of the pound. The brassie shaft ought to be slightly stiffer than that of the driver, for the simple reason that that club will have to do a little more hard work than is necessary in the case of the driver.

The spoon bears a certain relationship to the brassie, and here, as in the case of other iron clubs, there ought to be a goodly element of stiffness in the shaft. You use an iron because you want, at all costs, to get your ball away from a questionable lie at times, and if in the circumstances quoted you use a club with an inordinate amount of "give" in it, then you are defeating your very object.

The iron I would suggest is a good mid-iron. You require a medium amount of loft in this club, and, in this connection, I venture to say to the beginner that he will be astounded at the affection which in a comparatively short time he will develop for this club.

Then the mashie will come in for approaches of a short nature. Here you must get a fairly deep blade, for the reason that should you procure one of another variety, when you are in your novitiate stages you will find that the mashie will possess the element of the snare and delusion to the extent that it will cut clean under your ball and in all likelihood leave it lying exactly where it was originally.

And now we come to the niblick, the club which every player, or nearly every player, expects to retain its virtues even when the golfer himself has lost the greatest virtue



MY GRIP.

of all—good temper. In this instance I would advise a sort of mashie-niblick, and when you are at it you might as well have one with a good and big, healthy face. You do not require the blade of the club to be too sharp, and in regard to the shaft you require something that will stand some good hard work.

I would gladly gloss over the paragraph in which I have to deal with the putter, for of all the reviled clubs which one finds, the putter is what colloquially has been termed the edge of the limit. I have known a man to have close on thirty different putters at his home at one time, and I could relate scores of instances where good players have not felt comfortable unless they have gone out with two in the bag—a putter of the cleek variety and one made of aluminium and of a style well known. I personally prefer the latter, for the reason that I am convinced that a truer swing can be obtained with it than with the other kind. Here again you must have an amount of stiffness in the shaft. Conscientiously I feel that I am wasting space and the reader's time in



going into detail here, for by experience full well do I know that whatever advice I or anyone else might give to a given man, he would within a few months please himself. Get a putter the feel and balance of which you like, and then go out and do your best and your worst. May the former predominate over the latter!

In the short space which is at my disposal here I must be careful not to go too much into minor detail, and I will be content with dealing with what really are the rudiments so far as the beginner is concerned.

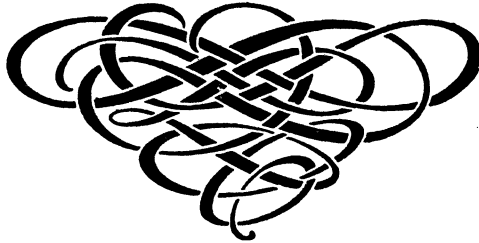
As for the grip, I keep my right thumb rather curved around the shaft. The left-hand fingers grip the club fairly securely, and the left thumb rests along the top-shaft. The fingers of the right hand go around the shaft so that the little finger is hooked on the left forefinger. That, in short, constitutes the finger grip, which practically has displaced the palm grip nowadays.

In putting I generally employ the same grip. I argue that thus I am enabled to

keep wrists at right angles to the line of the putt, the hollows of the wrists being opposite each other. Mark you, grip is the key to freedom, and freedom alone is the factor which makes for that pendulum-like swing which has so often been envied.

Now, as to where to grip the club, I would suggest that it is self-obvious that the place to grip the club is fairly near the top. Granted that in some cases you will be compelled to take it a trifle shorter, for ordinary purposes I think that if the top of the left hand be about an inch from the end of the shaft, you have got an average position. By adopting this plan you will find that the vast majority of the strokes which you have to execute can be done with a decent amount of success, according to what may be your handicap.

I have here dealt with what I consider to be the essentials for the beginner in the first place, and perhaps on some future occasion I may be privileged to go through the workings of the very clubs as they should be worked.



## SWEET LAVENDER.

**I** WAS 'alf-way down our street,  
Feeling jolly sure  
That I'd stood about enough,  
And a good bit more  
Than I *would*, from 'Liza Grey:  
Meant to jaw 'er straightaway!

I was 'alf-way down our street  
W'en I 'eard a sound.  
Something gripped me, strite it did—  
Made me 'eart turn round:  
"Lavender sweet! Come and buy!"  
Jest a common coster cry.

I was 'alf-way down our street  
W'en I 'eard the call,  
And, quite sudden, I 'alf thort  
That I'd growed back small:  
Saw our cottage garding, too,  
W'ere Dad's lavender bush grew!

I was 'alf-way down our street,  
And, like any kid,  
I just whips me round and went—  
Bought the lot, I did!  
Then I goes and ses to 'er:  
"Say, Liz, 'ave some lavender?"

ETHËL TALBOT.



# THE FEAR

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

**I had but yesterday  
A crushing fear to bear.  
I held it foolishness to pray;  
Thought God too great, too far  
away  
From my concerns to care.**

**Toward the fall of eve  
My fear grew so immense,  
I clutched the straw, prayed, "God,  
relieve  
My life of this, and I'll believe,  
And walk with less offence."**

**God did not answer . . . When  
I tossed awake at night,  
I thought how I had passed by men,  
Who trembled as I trembled there  
And left them to their fright.**

**I cried, not meaning pray'r:  
"If far You be, or near,  
Or if You care, or do not care,  
Or hear, or do not hear,  
My fellow's sufferings I'll share" . . .  
To-day I lost the fear!**

**A**T the time when this story happened Thomas Mervin was fifty and well-to-do, the fourth richest man in the little city of Brunton, and mayor for the third time. The citizens esteemed him greatly, but their esteem lacked warmth. They called him a just man, but hard and egotistic. Some, who spoke plain Saxon, said "selfish."

On the other hand, Mrs. Mervin, his childless wife, declared that "Tom" was the most unselfish man in the world.

Contradictory statements about a person may both be true, like the differing reports about the colour of the chameleon, which the minds of human beings much resemble. It was so with the statements about Mervin. He was unselfish and selfish in parts. He never considered himself in competition with his wife, but he gave very little consideration to other people, except old David Hughes, his first employer.

He had a strong reason for setting David and his wife apart from other people. Both had overlooked a grievous offence in his young days—an offence which might have ruined him for life, and would destroy his standing even now, if it were known. The offence was against his employer.

Old David had pardoned the transgression; had told the young man to make a fresh start, and sin no more. He kept the secret, and no one else knew of it, except Mrs. Mervin. Mervin had told her the facts when he proposed.

"I have no excuse," he said through his set teeth, "but I have repented of it and tried to purge it. You need not fear that I shall ever do anything of the kind again, or even feel tempted to. I don't tell you as a warning against me, only because it might come out some day, Kate. It isn't likely, but you never know. If you were my wife, and it *should* become known, you would share the trouble. So I am bound in honour to let you know what you'd risk. I haven't liked telling you, of course."

"My poor boy," cried Mrs. Mervin—but then she was Kate Emmett—"it is your troubles that I specially want to share!"

That was really true. Mervin had excuse for his extreme regard for his wife, in her great affection for him.

After his one slip he went very unswervingly and honourably through his life, and the two people who knew of the slip came to regard him with deserved respect and even admiration. Old Hughes was always a great friend to him. So was his wife. Both regarded his offence as entirely purged, and neither was in the least likely to mention it. He had almost forgiven himself for it, and had quite ceased to worry about it, when, during his third mayoralty, Hughes, who was now eighty-nine, was taken suddenly ill. He sent for Mervin just before he passed.

When Mervin arrived, the old man could not speak connectedly. He clutched Mervin's hand and muttered something about



"Documents . . . With lawyers . . . Ought to have burnt them. . . . Tom, my boy! . . . Tom! . . ."

"You mean—my affair?" Mervin gasped. "Oh, sir, you've kept them! I never thought of that! Write an order for them to be given to me."

"Paper!" the old man moaned. "Ink! . . . Yes, yes!"

They fetched paper and ink, but old David had written his last instruction; could not guide a pen. So he died, and his documents passed into the hands of his solicitors, who were also his executors, and Thomas Mervin was sick with fear.

He did not tell his wife the fear at first. He never worried her with any trouble which he could keep from her. But it was hard to deceive the woman who knew every tone of his voice and every line of his face. The second evening she asked him what was the matter.

"What is it, old man?" she inquired, slipping her arm through his. "It's no use your pretending with *me*!"

"Indigestion, I expect," he said glibly. "Nothing much; passing off. I'm quite all right now. If you noticed, I've been very cheerful to-night. I don't know when I've laughed so much."

"That was what I noticed," she told him. "Tom, you aren't afraid that Mr. Hughes has kept any old papers or anything? . . . Don't turn away, dear——"

"That's what he sent for me about, Kate," Mervin owned. "He was going to write an order for me to get them, but he was too far gone—too far gone, poor old fellow. I'm afraid it worried his last hour."

"Where are the papers, Tom?"

"Deedes and Athawes will have them as his executors," he told her.

They were the leading local solicitors. Mervin didn't get on with Deedes, who was a grim, oldish man, but Athawes and the Mervins were on good terms.

"They aren't unfriendly to you," Mrs. Mervin observed, "and Mr. Athawes is *very* nice. Surely they wouldn't say anything, just to hurt you? . . . I'd ordered the cards for the silver wedding. . . . Anyhow, *we'd* keep it. . . . Tom, it won't come to anything. After twenty-seven years of good life, God won't let it. We will pray!"

"Pray by all means, my dear," he agreed. "I don't believe in it, you know."

"Tom, dearest, you *do* believe in God!"

"Yes, yes! A God who rules by general

laws. I don't suppose He troubles about the individual insects any more than we do about a fly that falls in the milk-pot."

"We always take it out, Tom."

"For the sake of the milk. . . . But *you* pray. . . . As executors, they may consider that the affair gives the estate a claim on me. They will feel bound to enforce it, just as I should."

"But, Tom, you paid the claim. We insisted on it, though he didn't want you to."

"There is probably no evidence of that with the papers."

"But isn't everything wiped out after seven years?"

"That's a common mistake. Civil debts are wiped out, under certain conditions, after six years. A felony isn't. And it isn't prosecution that I fear. It's that through their investigations the matter will come out; and Deedes won't keep quiet about it. Suppose the papers show what I took and don't show that I repaid it. They will probably threaten a criminal action unless I pay now. If I show that I have repaid, I admit that I committed the misdeed—God forgive me! Deedes, anyhow, won't keep quiet about my confession. He envies me, hates me. It's the *exposure* that I fear, Kate, the business coming to light. It seems inevitable."

"When shall we know?" she asked, wiping her eyes with one hand and stroking his shoulder with the other.

"Whenever they come upon the papers—to-morrow, next week, next month. The sooner the sword drops the better. This suspense! I don't think I'm a coward, but——"

He buried his face in his hands.

"Tom! Tom, dear! Shall we go away, before anything can come out?"

"Make it worse. If only I didn't drag you into it, Kate! . . . Ordered the silver cards, eh?"

"I shall thank God, when the day comes, that I've shared with you for five-and-twenty years, and that I still share. . . . Especially that I share the troubles. . . ."

"I know. There's a chance that the documents don't show enough to do much harm, or that they mayn't realise what they show—quite an appreciable chance. Perhaps it's preyed on my mind, and I look on it too apprehensively. I may regard it more cheerfully after a night's sleep. Let's go to bed. Thank you for the way you've taken it, my dear."

They did not sleep much. He tried to



pretend that he slept to avoid keeping his wife awake. She pretended to sleep so that he should not worry about her; but in the small hours she slipped a hand through his arm, very gently so that she might not rouse him. He took her hand at once.

"Oh," she cried, "you aren't asleep, then?"

"No. I see several chances that it won't leak out," he tried to console her.

"So do I," she told him. "It's just the fear."

"Just the fear," he agreed. "Anyhow, he

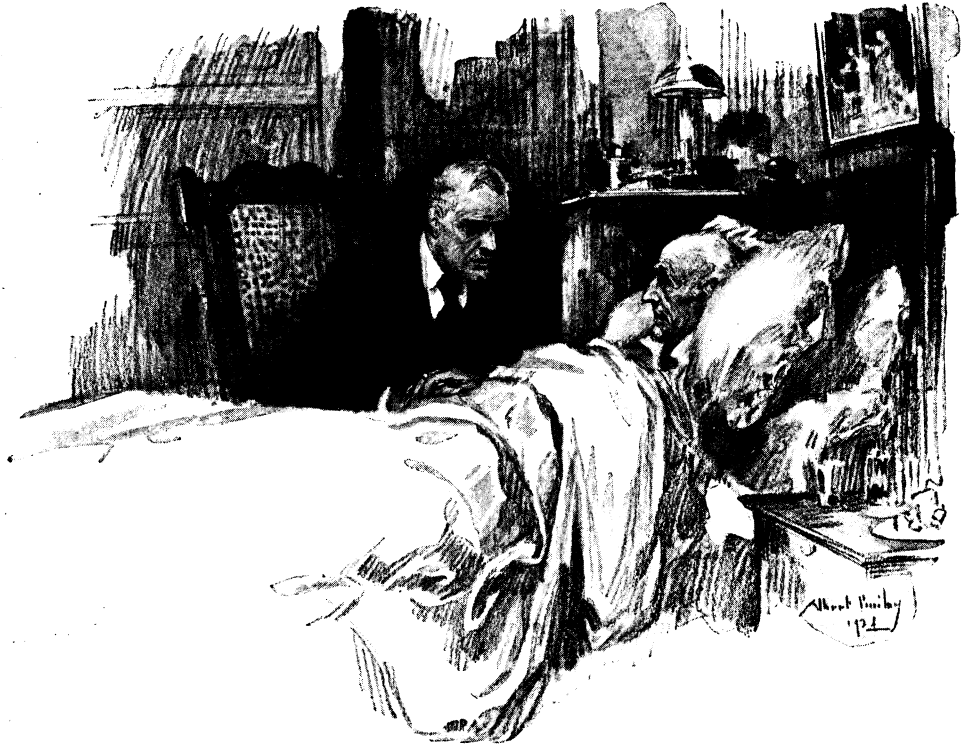
"And what I was seven-and-twenty years ago. He will give me justice for both, no doubt, if His attention is called to this particular insect."

"I shall call it. . . ."

"Yes, yes. You pray, as you believe in it, my dear."

"I have prayed," Mrs. Mervin said. "I have been doing it ever since you put the light out. God will hear. He will hear. . . . Anyhow, you have me, dear."

"Yes. He'll think that's more than I deserve. . . . It's no use crying before we're



"He clutched Mervin's hand and muttered something about 'Documents . . . With lawyers . . . Ought to have burnt them. . . . Tom, my boy!' . . . 'You mean—my affair?' Mervin gasped."

probably hadn't kept papers enough to prove the business, after all this time. I shall say that I decline to discuss the transaction. 'You must know,' I shall say, 'from the long friendliness between Hughes and me, that there was nothing standing between us.' On the whole, I think they will judge it at about the truth—that I wronged him and he forgave me. . . . That leaves me a discredited man."

"Not to me, Tom, not to me! Not to God. He knows what you have been for seven-and-twenty years."

hurt, Kate. We won't take on the trouble unless and until it comes. Let's try to put it out of our minds. Now we'll sleep. I shall look in on Deedes and Athawes to-morrow morning—I've a good excuse—and see if I notice anything strange in their manner."

"Come home to lunch," she begged, "and tell me. Besides, I always want to be near you when you are worried."

"Probably," he reported at lunch, "it's only my fears, but the inference that I drew from their manner wasn't very favourable, Kate. Deedes was civil enough,



but I thought that perhaps he was a trifle *too* civil. Athawes seemed unusually cordial, too. He mentioned poor old David several times. He has left me a thousand, with some very complimentary remarks. He says in the will that he would have left me more if I had needed it, or even desired it, and that the thousand is merely a mark of esteem and admiration of twenty-seven years' friendship and esteem. Deedes grunted out that the old man's arithmetic had grown shaky. You see, it's *thirty* years since I first went to him. I thought Athawes looked away when Deedes said that, so I took the bold course at once."

"What did you do?" his wife asked quickly. "You'll be careful, won't you? You are rather—rather risky, you know, dear."

"Yes, yes. I win at Auction because I take my risk. You lose because you don't. Fear hasn't made a fool of me, and won't. I called up to my hand, that's all, knowing that I was probably playing a loser. I said, 'No, the arithmetic is right, Deedes. The first few years I was rather an idle young dog. Then old David had a heart-to-heart talk with me, twenty-seven years ago. He knows that I put down half of my getting on to the talk. That is what he means. There are *two* people who made me, Deedes—old David and my wife!'"

"Why," Mrs. Mervin cried, "it has always been that *you* looked after *me*!"

"Ah, that's what did it! Athawes spoke quite warmly about you; went rather out of his way, I thought, as if he wanted me to realise that he wouldn't bring trouble on you if he could help it. Do you know, I had rather a fancy that he and Deedes didn't agree about their action upon those documents, and that Athawes was on my side. Anyhow, he mentioned that they hadn't been into poor old Hughes's papers thoroughly, only sufficiently to make sure that there was no other will. They'll read that at the funeral to-morrow. If he reads it, I shall take it for a good omen. Athawes would never agree to say anything against me before people."

It was Deedes who read the will. Mrs. Mervin put her hand upon her husband's knee as soon as he took it up.

"You must take it as merely provisional," he warned everybody. "We have not yet thoroughly scrutinised the papers left by the deceased. Until we have done so, it is impossible to give a figure for the residual legacies. Mr. Hughes left a great

mass of documents, some of them very old. They may indicate claims upon or in favour of the estate, which as executors we must regard strictly. Mr. Athawes and I intend to go through them this afternoon. There is one which appears to concern *you*, Mr. Mervin, to which we shall give early attention."

Mervin nodded, but said nothing.

"It seems," he said, when he and his wife were walking home, "that the fear was justified. I didn't like the way that Deedes looked at me. Of course there is the hope that the papers don't show anything clearly."

"I shall pray that they don't," Mrs. Mervin almost sobbed.

"Don't give way in the street, Kate. . . . Yes, you pray!"

"You, too, Tom dear," she pleaded. "You, too!"

"What's the use?" he muttered. "Providence must be impersonal. Reason tells us that. Natural laws do not respect persons. Here we are. . . . The Mayor's house! . . . There'll soon be a new Mayor. The mere suspicion will be enough to drive me out of the place. . . . You must lie down, and try to sleep for a bit, Kate. You're played out."

"How can I sleep, with this hanging over you?" she protested.

"For that reason," he said, using the argument which he thought would help her most to "bear up." "Because you are the only person who can help me through it. A sleep will buck up my helper." He patted her shoulder.

"Then I'll try, dear," she agreed.

He took her upstairs, adjusted her pillows, covered her with the eiderdown quilt; left her and walked downstairs to his study; lit the gas-fire and sat in an armchair in front of that.

He went over his old misdeed for the hundredth time; thought out again what documents would show what; argued out again which the old man was likeliest to have kept.

"Looking at it as a reasonable being," he concluded, as he had concluded many times before, "not as a coward in fear, it's pretty sure that there won't be enough in them to enable Deedes and Athawes to take any action—anyhow, not legal action—but it's also pretty sure that there will be enough to raise their suspicions—strong suspicions. What will they do?"

"If it depended on Athawes, I might scrape out of any serious bother. He's a



particularly good-natured fellow. But even he has to do his duty, and if there appears to him to be a claim against me, he'd feel bound to pursue it. I think he'd come and see me; have it out as a man to man. I should tell him the truth; explain that I paid old David back every penny; enable him to trace the money through the old man's bank book; not that I'd mind paying it again, only because the payment now would furnish damning evidence against me. Anyhow, one way or another, I should satisfy Athawes that the estate had not even a moral claim upon me. I could satisfy a court of law

personal God, like Kate believes in. . . . I don't think Athawes would tell anyone. If it rested with him, I don't think I should be punished at all. 'Bear in mind, Athawes,' I should say, 'that you can't punish the man I was. I am not that man. And bear in mind that you cannot punish even the



"'That's the answer to my prayer!' he said, wiping his forehead slowly."

as to that. This being so, Athawes would do nothing to punish me for a boy's wrongdoing twenty-seven years ago. Twenty-seven years! Neither would a court of law; not send me to prison. Neither, if He's just, would God—if there's a God. . . . There is, of course. I meant a

man that I am, without punishing my wife.' . . . If I believed in a God who listens to prayer, I should say that to God. . . .

"But Deedes is the senior partner, the older, the cleverer, the stronger, the harder; and he doesn't like me. He wouldn't be intentionally unjust, but he'd take the



excuse to be just. It is Deedes who will settle it. What will *he* do ?

"At a guess, I think he will simply refuse to pay me my legacy ; say that, if I want it, I can bring an action against the executors ; that it is enough to cover, including interest, a claim which apparently the estate has had against me for twenty-seven years. I could prove payment, or I could renounce the legacy. Either would give me away, and in either case Deedes will probably tell the residuary legatees—be proud of his sharpness, boast of it—and I shall be a ruined man. The work of twenty-seven years lost, and Kate nearly broken-hearted, unable to face her friends ! She is such a sensitive woman ; sees little slights so large, God bless her ! I must take her away from here. Tear up our roots. Kate's roots are deeper than mine. She gets so fond of people. . . .

"It isn't just. It *isn't* just. If there were the personal God that Kate believes in, He wouldn't have done it. If I believed, I would pray. What should I say if I tried a prayer ?"

He sat staring at the fire ; tried to frame a petition. . . . "You know that I have been a good man for twenty-seven years. . . . Had he been ? He didn't feel so sure. He had been good to his wife, but God might say that his wife was full reward for that. She was, and more. There was nothing owing to him on *that* item. Well, he had been an upright man for the twenty-seven years. That was a fair claim. He had been upright even in little things which would never be found out. A fair claim, but God might say that in return he had had twenty-seven years prosperity and esteem. Before then he had done something for which retribution was owing to him. The outstanding balance of his account was just that ! If he was called upon to pay it, he couldn't complain. Only Kate would have to pay a share. . . . "My poor old Kate !"

He put his face in his hands and groaned. "I don't want to draw a balance," he told himself. "I want a gift ! And I *don't* believe in prayer. What's the use of words . . .

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.  
Words without thoughts never to Heaven go !

That's from Hamlet. It was the answer to a puzzle I guessed when I was a boy. Only words to me then, and now a thought. What can I honestly pray ? Only that !"

He rose and stared at himself in the glass.

How haggard he looked ! Presently he prayed.

"If this fear passes from me by to-morrow morning," he said, "I will believe that You helped me—believe and make the rest of my life as good as I can."

He sat down in his chair again ; tried to believe that he expected an answer, and couldn't believe.

Presently his wife came in.

"I have told them to bring tea in here, Tom," she said. "We like being cosy together, don't we ? Tom, I have prayed, but— Don't you think that God would think—"

"I don't presume to do that," he muttered. "The finite cannot guess the Infinite !"

"But, dear, He knows that we can only think with such minds and experience as He gives us. I think it is *you* who ought to pray."

He sat back in his chair and looked up at her. "I have prayed," he told her, "the prayer which I honestly can. I've promised that if He takes this trouble from me I'll—"

"Oh, Tom !" his wife cried. "Oh, Tom ! You can't bargain with God !"

"He has given me the mind and training of a business man," Mervin said stubbornly. "He knows that, if He troubles about me. I've no reason to suppose—"

The telephone bell rang sharply. Mervin stopped in his speech and answered it.

"Mervin speaking. Oh, you, Deedes ! . . . I shall be in. . . . Thank you !"

"That's the answer to my prayer !" he said, wiping his forehead slowly. "Deedes is coming to see me at a quarter to ten to-morrow morning, about some papers which Hughes left. If it had been Athawes, I'd have had some hope ; but Deedes. . . . Well, my dear. . . . You *are* that, Kate. . . ."

"Yes, yes !"

"We will go somewhere together—abroad. You always wanted to travel, you know."

"God will notice that in your deepest distress you think first of me !" she cried, wiping her eyes. "He will certainly notice that. . . . Oh, my man ! . . . My dear old Tom !"

"Well, the more you can buck up and be happy, the better it will be for me, remember."

"You say that just to comfort *me*. Talk about nothing. Here's Polly with the tea. She's worried about her mother."



"What's the matter with your mother, Polly?" Mervin asked the red-eyed girl.

"It's her chest, sir," the girl said. "The doctor says she ought to go to Switzerland. As if Switzerland was for the likes of us!"

"I'll see what I can do, Polly," he said. "Ask the doctor to look in at my office and speak to me about it."

"Oh, sir!" the girl cried. "Oh, sir! I didn't expect it of *you*!"

"After this," he apologised to his wife, when the girl had gone out, "I shall always have a fellow-feeling for any poor dev—person who is worried out of his life, or hers. I shan't be able to help holding out a hand, shan't be able to help it."

\* \* \* \* \*

He kept thinking that while he lay awake that night. His wife slept from sheer exhaustion, helped by the idea that she must keep herself as well rested and cheerful as she could, so as to brighten up her husband.

"Where I've been wrong," he told himself, "is in not thinking enough about other people—except Kate, of course. That's the balance against me. I haven't always turned a deaf ear to those who asked for help, but those who deserve it mostly don't ask; and I haven't troubled about them; shouldn't have done anything for Polly's mother, before this afternoon, unless Kate had asked me to do it. I didn't know then what it felt like to worry till your very soul shivered; didn't think how people were feeling when I knew they were in trouble. Well, they shall have my thought and help in future. This isn't an attempt to bargain with God. As Kate said, you can't. Besides, it's too late. I know what Deedes's visit means. No, I can't wipe off the balance in time. My resolution isn't in the hope of bribing the Almighty. It's because I shall never see a poor devil in a funk again without *wanting* to help him. And however badly things turn out to-morrow, I swear that I'll do it. . . . Thank Heaven, Kate can sleep!"

And presently he did.

"Kate," he said, in the morning, just after breakfast, "it's no use deceiving our-

selves. When Deedes comes, the blow is going to fall. We shall have to face trouble, but it won't be so bad that we can't go away somewhere together. Let us be thankful for that. Perhaps I shall be a better husband——"

"You can't be!" she cried.

"Anyhow, a better man for it. Do you know, dear girl, my trouble has made me realise what other people suffer. For the rest of my life I shall be readier to help. . . . There's a knock. That will be Deedes. I must see him alone."

"I will just say 'Good morning,'" Mrs. Mervin proposed; "perhaps it will make him remember that what hurts you hurts me. He has always been nice to *me*! I will just speak to him and go. . . . Good morning, Mr. Deedes! I waited just to shake hands with you; but you men like to do your business by yourselves, so I'll go."

But Deedes said there was no need for her to go.

"I have merely called," he explained, "to hand over this sealed package. Mr. Hughes labelled it so carefully: 'In the event of my death to be given unopened to my esteemed friend, Thomas Mervin,' that I wouldn't have any mistake about his getting it safely. . . . I'll go, and leave *you* to comfort him when he reads this last message from his old friend, and not intrude in what will be a purely personal matter. I know what a high opinion Hughes had of him—an opinion, may I say, which we all share—even those of us who have had their little differences with him."

"It is the documents," Mervin said in a hushed voice, when Deedes had departed. "Old David forgot that he had secured that they should be handed over to me. . . . He wandered in his mind during the last day or two. . . ."

"It is the answer," his wife gasped, "to your prayer!"

"That's to come," Mervin muttered, swaying a little and holding to his wife. "I'm going to be easier with people, going to do a little good in the world, before my number goes up. That was the prayer."







“Oh, then the—the driver wasn’t—alone?”

# WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

“THE first turnin’ on your left next the little bit o’ wood opposite the second turnin’ on your right arter you pass the pub with the ’olly’ocks in the garden. . . . Thank ’Eaven,” added Able-Seaman Adams devoutly, “for a good mem’ry!”

He paused to tilt his cap at a further rakish angle and to mop a heated brow, for, despite the palliating fact that he had not “passed” the pub with the hollyhocks in the garden, the seven steep and dusty West Country miles that lay behind him in the golden September sunlight had provided four distinct and separate ascents of a gradient defying the assistance of the push-bike that was Able-Seaman Adams’s present mode of transport.

“What you want in these parts.” reflected

Able-Seaman Adams bitterly, “is a bloomin’ aeryoplane.” He gazed with rancour at the fringe of fir trees crowning the steep hill ahead, and evidently constituting the “little bit o’ wood” aforesaid, beyond which must lurk that blessed “first turnin’ on your left” leading to his journey’s end. With a countenance of grim determination he proceeded to propel the bicycle upwards towards the skyline.

To right and left stretched a panorama of glorious open country, heather and autumn gorse a-shimmer under the hot September sun, beechwoods already tawny golden, a line of hazy blue sea glimpsed between the blunt shoulders of two great bracken-patched hills.

Able-Seaman Adams sighed.

Half-way up the hill was a yellow sign-



board imparting the consoling information that the gradient was one in six.

Able-Seaman Adams grunted.

The purr of a car sounded behind, and a low, grey two-seater overtook him, driven by a young man in riding kit. Beside the young man was seated a very beautiful lady wearing a white coat and a floating golden motor veil, and an expression of languid aloofness.

Able-Seaman Adams, behind whose stolid countenance hid an incorrigible addiction to lightning calculations of sentimental shrewdness, looked after the car and shook his head.

"'Im and 'er," he reflected solemnly, "you'd never think as they was sooted, you wouldn't."

Apparently he never took into account the fact that there was probably no reason why they should be "sooted" at all; he had a quaint habit of making these gratuitous reflections anent man and maid, and had he lived ashore would have possibly been an inveterate match-maker of the most intrepid enthusiasm. For he possessed an almost uncanny swiftness of observation, and in the brief moment of the car's passage had "taken in" the faces of the two passengers, retaining a clear memory of them as the last flutter of the golden veil vanished from sight over the brow of the hill.

By the time he himself reached that enviable position the car was, of course, out of sight. On the left was the grateful shade of the "little bit o' wood," on the right the second "turnin'" indicated by a finger-post marked "To Hawcombe." Immediately ahead was a long, gradual, seductive descent, down which, two minutes later, Able-Seaman Adams was skimming like a swallow. At the foot of the hill he came upon the Damsel in Distress.

The Damsel in Distress was looking as cross as a mouth made for laughter would allow. That she was attired like Rosalind only temporarily prejudiced Able-Seaman Adams. He did not "hold with" horsewomen who dispensed with side-saddles and habit skirts, but this girl, slight and straight and trim in her boyish riding kit, looked uncommonly well. Despite the fact that she was obviously "put out," her voice, as she claimed Able-Seaman Adams's attention, was also uncommonly charming.

He dismounted hastily, as became a knight of the road, and hoped, seeing the lady without her horse, that there had been no accident?

She shook her head.

"My horse has gone home. He was lent to me for this morning's cubbing, and his owner's groom took him on half an hour ago. I'm waiting for a car to take *me* home. That is why I stopped you—to ask if you'd seen one on the road. Which way have you come?"

Able-Seaman Adams explained that he was journeying from Crayport to Little Cumberby. Yes, a car *had* passed him not long ago—a little grey one, driven by a gent as had been riding—a young gent.

Two wide and lovely hazel eyes looked at him blankly out of a small square face. "That must have been the one I'm waiting for. But what has happened to it? It can't have vanished."

Able-Seaman Adams slowly removed his cap, thereby causing the descent into the dust of a packet of tobacco, a small comb, a sandwich indifferently camouflaged in a portion of a newspaper, and a Maltese lace collar, this last being an offering at the shrine of one Gracie Jenkins, daughter of the landlord of "The Crown and Anchor" at Little Cumberby. Having scratched his head in deep thought, Able-Seaman Adams retrieved his property, replaced it in the cap, and the cap on his head, and expressed his opinion that the car had taken the other turning—the one on your right opposite the little bit o' wood at the top of the hill.

"But it couldn't. I mean, it was all arranged that I should wait here, and—and he should pick me up. We both live miles away from here—beyond Little Cumberby—and that other road goes in the opposite direction—to Hawcombe."

Able-Seaman Adams thought again, profoundly. "P'r'aps they'll come round some other way, miss," he suggested consolingly.

"They?" There was a sudden flicker in the hazel eyes. "Oh, then the—the driver wasn't—alone?"

Able-Seaman Adams realised that he had put his foot in it. "Well, no, miss."

The lady said nothing for a moment. There was a warm, rosy colour in her cheeks. Cub hunting is fine exercise on a September morning. She regarded Able-Seaman Adams with a clear and searching gaze.

"The—the other man in the car," she said slowly, "did you happen to notice what he was like? You see, if I knew who it was, it might explain things."

Able-Seaman Adams hesitated. Behind



his hesitation he was conscious of a very definite recollection of the "im and 'er" who had prompted his soliloquy. He was also conscious that the hazel eyes demanded

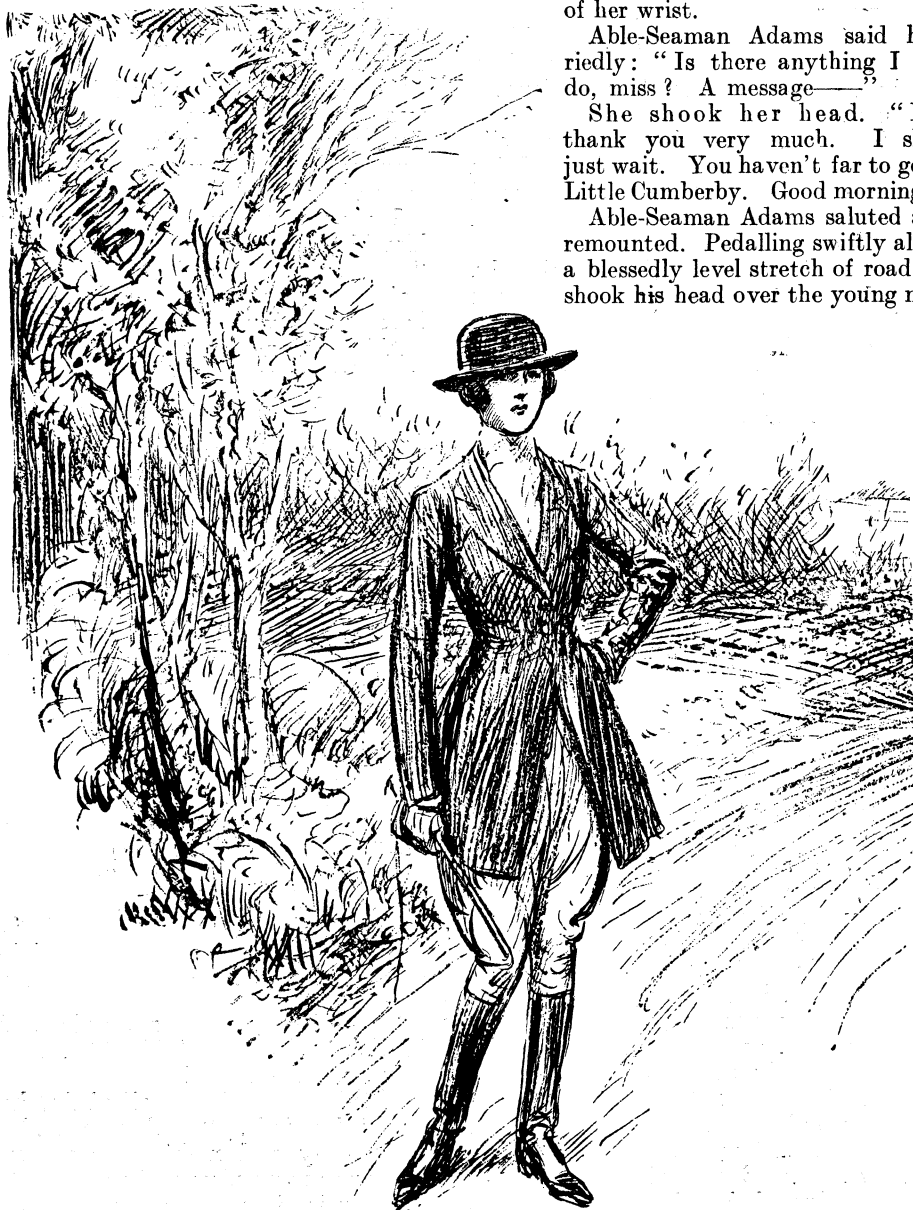
coat," as the description sounded somewhat classical.

"Oh, thank you very much," said Rosalind gently, curling the thong of her hunting whip round with a deft turn of her wrist.

Able-Seaman Adams said hurriedly: "Is there anything I can do, miss? A message—"

She shook her head. "No, thank you very much. I shall just wait. You haven't far to go to Little Cumberby. Good morning!"

Able-Seaman Adams saluted and remounted. Pedalling swiftly along a blessedly level stretch of road, he shook his head over the young man



"The hazel eyes expressed a good many things, but not, it seemed, just the thing that the young man looked for."

an immediate and accurate reply. He focussed his own on the horizon.

"It was a lady, miss, a lady in a yellow scarf." Then he added, "And a white

in the grey two-seater. Had the young man possessed the common-sense—Able-Seaman Adams employed a word more forceful and somewhat less refined—that he



should have, he would surely have realised that the lady of the covert coat and breeches and the straight and simple way of talking, and the hazel eyes, was vastly more "sooted" to him than the lady of the golden veil and languid air.

At which point in his reflections Able-Seaman Adams reached the turning to Little Cumberby.

Half a mile further on, from the open gateway of a drive leading to a low white house, slid a grey two-seater driven by a

bicycle bell, and emitted a simultaneous yell that was a credit to the lung-power of the British Navy. The young man in the two-seater slowed down and turned his head. Able-Seaman Adams swept his craft smartly alongside and, with a large hand grasping the other's equivalent to a gunswale, embarked on his self-imposed mission.

Begging the pardon of the young man in riding kit, but he thought he'd ought to mention the fact that a lady was waiting for him on the Crayport road.

The young man looked at the sailor with eyes that were keen and honest in a square and rather ordinary face.

"A lady?" he echoed doubtfully.

"A young lady, wot 'as been ridin' with the 'ounds same as you." Able-Seaman



"'Moirs!' he said. 'Moirs!'"

young man in riding kit. It turned in the direction of Little Cumberby.

Chivalry and indignation prompted Able-Seaman Adams's intervention in the case. He sounded a crescendo warning on the

Adams's indignation increased at this revelation of the young man's perfidy. "She's bin waiting some time. Stopped me, she did, to ask had I seen you on the road."

He allowed a weighty pause, delicately



refraining from allusion to the lady of the golden veil, but fixing the culprit with a sternly accusing eye.

He derived some satisfaction from observing that the young man's countenance "looked queer," and that his voice was sharp as he said—

"There wasn't—she hadn't had an accident? You're sure she was all right?"

"She was all *right*, sir," said Able-Seaman Adams severely, "except for waitin' so long, she expectin' you to take her home an' you not turnin' up."

The young man was backing and turning the car. He still "looked queer," but he certainly did not resent Able-Seaman Adams's severity—one might almost have said that he did not notice it. With the little car swung about and his foot on the accelerator, he looked at Able-Seaman Adams rather dazedly.

"I'm very much obliged to you," he said, and something in his voice and manner instinctively inclined Able-Seaman Adams to the reflection that perhaps, after all, the lady of the breeches and hazel eyes would not so much mind having waited.

The car shot out of sight. In a little over two minutes and a half its driver pulled up, swung out of his seat, and confronted a slim, erect figure.

"Moira!" he said. "*Moira!*"

And he looked at her as if he saw her for the first time after ten years.

The hazel eyes expressed a good many things, but not, it seemed, just the thing that the young man looked for.

"You?" she said. "Oh, I thought—I thought—I mean, the sailor said——"

"He said you were waiting for me." Hugh Brandon spoke very quietly, and the ordinary countenance, that Able-Seaman Adams had involuntarily approved, still held something of wonder. "Moira, if I'd known——"

The girl began to laugh. "If you'd known!" she echoed in a hard little voice. "If you'd known—what then?"

"I'd have come before. You know," he said simply.

"Oh"—the hazel eyes flashed—"you're very kind! But that would have been a pity, wouldn't it? I should hate to feel you were—sacrificing yourself for me."

"Moira!" He took a step towards her. "What are you talking about? You know quite well that—when you said you wanted me I'd have come—from the other end of

the earth. When the fellow said you were waiting for me——"

"Oh," she cried out, "but I wasn't—I wasn't!" She flushed carnation red. "I was waiting for—Derek Vansittart."

They looked at one another.

To young Brandon the thing was as plain as it was disconcerting. It did not require much ingenuity to explain the sailor's mistake. Brandon knew that Derek Vansittart had been out cubbing that morning, that he drove a small grey car, and that for some time since that day last season when it was borne in on him with bitter clarity that Miss Moira Cochrane was barely aware of his existence, Derek Vansittart, on the contrary, had achieved a very definite personality indeed.

Out of a long silence he heard his own voice saying slowly and carefully: "I'm sorry. Evidently the man mistook the cars. Perhaps Vansittart may have gone home early."

Moira said nothing, but she looked a good deal. Something in the situation made her furiously angry—angry with Able-Seaman Adams for making the absurd but excusable mistake, angry with Hugh Brandon for—well, for being convenient to its making, angry with Derek Vansittart for keeping her waiting.

The fighting spirit expressed in young Brandon's square jaw suddenly got its innings.

"Since I'm here, let me drive you home, Moira," he said.

From which it will be inferred that Hugh Brandon was no adept in phrases tactful and pretty.

Moira said in a little cold voice that perhaps owed something to a hypothetical flutter of golden chiffon: "Thank you, but I shouldn't think of troubling you. If it hadn't been for this stupid mistake, you'd have been home by now. And besides, Derek"—she looked at him very squarely—"Derek is sure to be here soon."

Hugh Brandon stood his ground.

"He—the sailor said you'd been waiting a long time," he remarked grimly. "And as to trouble—well, you know the answer to that."

Miss Moira flicked her trim brown riding boot with her whip and directed her gaze at a flock of starlings in an adjacent field.

"If you want variety," she suggested coolly, "you might try taxi-driving."

"Variety?"

"A change of passengers."



"I don't know what in the world you mean."

Scorn and the sudden rising of the flock of starlings brought her glance back to his. "Surely you needn't bother to pretend like that? There's no reason for it, is there? I'm only sorry that you came all the way back from Belltons on my account."

"But——"

She checked him with a little imperious gesture and turned away. Over a very erect shoulder she informed him that his best course was to return whence he came. And she walked a few steps down the road that he might be quite sure about it.

Young Mr. Brandon caught up with her. "Moira, I haven't been to Belltons. What do you mean?"

Her little laugh was frost and ice and snow, and her voice was honey.

"Then where did you leave Lady Sybil?" she demanded.

He stared at her, and at the very moment when explanation flashed upon him, two miles away an able seaman with a sentimental interest in other people's affairs was gazing sympathetically at a grey two-seater with whose internal arrangements its driver, a young man in riding kit, seemed to be experiencing trouble.

As he proffered assistance he reflected that something beside the car's inside must have gone wrong; there certainly had not been time for the young man to have driven the damsel of the hazel eyes home and to have returned to Little Cumberby.

"I 'opes you found the lady, sir?" he inquired delicately.

The young man consigned some gadget to perdition and raised a flushed countenance, at which Able-Seaman Adams gazed in bewildered dismay.

For it was not the countenance of the young man whom he had tacitly censured for keeping the lady waiting. Somehow, despite his bewilderment, Able-Seaman Adams was conscious that of the two he preferred the countenance of the latter; also that the one confronting him wore, besides annoyance, a surprise equal to his own.

He hastened to beg its owner's pardon, explaining that he had made a mistake. "I'd mistook you for another gent—along of the motor bein' the same, and you both of a height, an' in ridin' rig."

Derek Vansittart looked at him very hard. "I am trying to find a lady," he said

shortly, "as soon as I can get this thing going."

Able-Seaman Adams became very thoughtful.

"If it's a young lady—also in riding rig—that's been waitin' a long time," he said innocently, "I rather think as the other gent 'as took 'er 'ome."

Vansittart, straightening up, said: "What the devil"—furiously.

He knew quite well that, in order to keep in the good graces of Lady Sybil of the golden veil, he had unpardonably left little Moira Cochrane to cool her heels at their appointed rendezvous for an unconscionable time, but he had not expected to be apprised of the fact by a strange blue-jacket.

Able-Seaman Adams saluted respectfully.

With a further confidential comment to the car's interior, Derek Vansittart got her started, and a moment later was vanishing, with some jerks and snorts, round the bend in the road.

Able-Seaman Adams leaned upon the handle-bars of his cycle and shook his head. "If I was a girl," he said seriously, "it's t'other bloke I'd fancy. But there, you can't never tell with wimmen. Queer thing how alike they was till you was close." He heaved a large sigh. "Well, she's got 'em both to choose from. Wonder which it was she was waitin' for?" He paused irresolutely, conning the sunny road behind him. "Seems like I ought to see if things 'as turned out all right. It ain't more'n two mile." And he turned the bicycle and remounted at precisely the moment of Derek Vansittart's arrival at the trysting place of Miss Moira Cochrane.

Miss Moira was there, so also was Hugh Brandon, and it would appear that neither of them was delighting in the other's company to any extent.

For, indeed, Hugh, having echoed "Lady Sybil?" in the blankest tones, was instructed not to be so ridiculous.

It was then that he realised the truth of the whole absurdly involved affair, and, realising, knew a furious desire to tell Derek Vansittart his opinions without gloves, a desire that was scarcely modified by Derek Vansittart's—

"Hullo, Moira! Awf'ly sorry to have kept you waitin', you know! Hullo, Brandon! Decent little scamper, what? Had a breakdown?"

"No," said Hugh shortly. There was a dull red in his tanned face, and he avoided looking at Moira.



In the silence that followed—an odd, awkward silence, fraught with the mingled farce and tenseness of the situation—Moira Cochrane looked at the two men as if she saw them both for the first time: Derek Vansittart, debonair and charming, who had flirted with her for a whole season; Hugh Brandon, who accepted her indifference as if he, too, were indifferent, yet who all the time had waited.

Vansittart's laugh broke in.

"Well, Moira, if you're ready, we may as well get going, what? Come along!"

Something in his tone, carelessly possessive and assured, stung the colour into her face. She, too, had guessed by now that it was Vansittart's car in which Able-Seaman Adams had seen the lady in the "yellow scarf and white coat." But it wasn't that fact alone, or even what it stood for, but a vision, new and clear, that prompted her to move deliberately across to Hugh Brandon.

"Thanks very much," she told Derek Vansittart quietly. "I've been 'ready' an hour. But Hugh is going to drive me home. We'd just arranged it when you came—so."

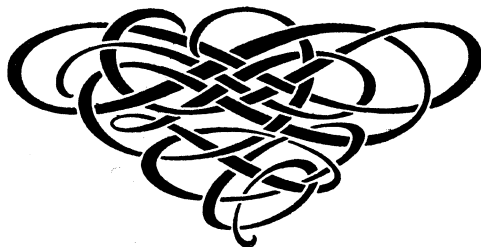
It was precisely fifteen minutes after this remark that Able-Seaman Adams rounded the bend in the road.

Moira was there, so also was one little grey car, one young man in riding rig, one little cloud of dust marking someone's departure in the distance.

Able-Seaman Adams was not noticed at all.

"If that sailor hadn't mixed you and Derek up," Moira was saying tragically, "I should never have known, Hugh darling. But I do think he was awfully stupid to do it, for you're not a bit alike."

Able-Seaman Adams retreated. "The gratitude," he mused plaintively, "of human nature! But it's the right one, bless 'er!"



## THE TREASURES OF DARKNESS.

**S**TARS, and white moths, and down a country lane  
 Flowers gleaming in the headlights of a car,  
 A river in the darkness, and afar  
 An owl that calls again and yet again;  
 A barking dog, the passing of a train,  
 An utter silence that no sound can mar,  
 These things the treasures of the darkness are,  
 And sleep, and the forgetfulness of pain.  
 But sometimes in the darkness of the night  
 There is no solace. All that we can do  
 Is to await the coming of the light.  
 Then darkness dies, and up against the blue  
 Strong is the silver-breasted martin's flight,  
 And morning seems miraculously new.

SYBIL RUEGG.





"Mpono jerked the torch above his head, poised it for an instant, and threw it full in the face of the elephant."

# A PENALTY INFLICTED

By ROBERTSON CARFRAE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

**T**HE elders have decided that the elephant will be driven into the pit and killed there. Let this be the end of argument. It will be done to-night." Dorindi curtly addressed his villagers from the stool of authority which, as chief, he occupied during the deliberations of his council; fury snapped from his narrowed eyes.

"And we say that he will be hunted to the rocks and there surrounded!" Mpono bin Salimu, leader of the young men, flung his angry ultimatum to the scowling chief.

"That is foolishness!" shouted Dorindi,

his body trembling with the violence of his rage. "The beast has stayed near us for twenty days. All is ready. Why should the plan be changed?"

"The rains are long overdue; the sky is clouding. The pit is in the river-bed, and the beast may be covered by a flood before he is cut up. And the village is starving for the meat!" Mpono folded his arms and stood his ground stolidly.

Dorindi flung his leopard skin about him with a quick gesture. "But how many men would be slain in such a venture? The pit is safer. The beast cannot escape us;



but for his injured foreleg, he would have gone long since. Have the madmen amongst ye reckoned the cost of your way?"

"He will stampede to the bush if he is driven, and be lost for ever. A bull elephant is not to be driven like a goat." Mpono was obdurate.

"Nor will he stand like a goat in the rocks while his throat is cut. Have done! The beast will be driven to-night. Let the young men open their ears to the wisdom that comes with age." Dorindi sat down on his stool and conferred with his elders.

"Wisdom! Ho, wisdom is but talk!" commented Mpono scornfully. "Was ever an elephant caught by talk?"

"Or a maiden by the brave clothes of a dandy? *Mpongozi*! \* Braggart!" The chief flung the insult at the young man without turning his head.

Men in the crowd laughed. It was well known that Mpono bin Salimu had wished to marry the daughter of Dorindi, but had failed for lack of the ten goats which the chief had demanded for Arana's hand. It was also true that Mpono spent much trouble on the adornment of his stocky person.

Dorindi's villagers were seated in the square beneath the huge fig tree, sacred to the spirits of their ancestors, which was used as a meeting-place for the council of elders. The capture of the big bull elephant was a problem over which the villagers had split into two factions; the dispute raged furiously amongst the crowd.

The council of betel-chewing old men, whose talk revolved for ever about the same point like goats tethered to a stake, had incurred the wrath of the younger warriors. Mpono bin Salimu and his friends believed that to drive the elephant to the pit was to invite disaster. Dorindi, vicious-tempered as a snake, would not accept their plan in place of his own, evolved three weeks before, when the rains were far off. His vanity forbade.

So, sheltered from the blazing sun of the afternoon, the whole village squatted on the baked red earth of the square and listened to the debate. The straggling brown huts, built on the high ground above the dried bed of the Ruli river, were deserted.

The young men withdrew in a group and noisily discussed their case. They were convinced that Dorindi was wrong, for a big bull is a dangerous creature, even when he has no injured leg to irritate him.

Against that was the fact that the village

was starving. The district was barren; when the rains did not come, famine descended, and it was a case of food at almost any price. Mpono bin Salimu reviewed the facts of the business with strict impartiality.

"Thus I think," he concluded finally. "The old men are fools and Dorindi a headstrong man who will not sacrifice his own plan. Therefore it will be better if we submit. If Dorindi loses the elephant, let him take the blame. The people cannot starve; let us agree to drive him!"

"Ai-ee!" came the reluctant chorus of approval.

They turned again to the elders under the fig tree, mumbling of ancient grievances, and Mpono held up his hand for a hearing. The women in the outer circles stopped their chattering, laid restraining hands on the children who gambolled and laughed in the dust.

"Then, Dorindi, the young men will adopt your plan, though we think it foolish and doomed to failure. But starvation cannot be averted by words only. Men must eat!"

"The hunting will begin as soon as the moon is high"—Dorindi puffed his chest in pride, his prestige was restored—"and there will be a feast when the elephant is cut up."

Mpono bin Salimu glanced at the reddening afternoon sun. Against it lay a wisp of cloud, no more substantial than gauze, but a sure portent of the rainy season.

"It may be that the rains will decide the question of a feast," he grunted. Followed by his young warriors, he withdrew, leaving the old men to cackle toothlessly over their victory. Dorindi applied himself to the jar of *pombe*\* which lay close to his hand; he bragged to the council with the complete assurance of slight intoxication, vociferating triumphantly the assurance that the domination of the elders, who had ruled all Africa for centuries, was stronger than the hot-headedness of youth. Whereupon, having twisted his cunning face into the mirthless semblance of a smile, Dorindi departed for his hut, followed by a naked small boy bearing the gourd of *pombe*.

Dorindi's wife, however, did not share in his feeling of victory, cunningly won. Although the chief of the Ruli village had long suffered her virulent abuse, never had he known so savage an outburst.

As he came into the hut, he said

\* A vain fellow.

\* Native beer.



pompously : " I have endured enough—and more than enough—from that bleating goat Mpono bin Salimu. Never will he marry my daughter ! Rather would I have Shaitani—the devil himself—for a son-in-law ! "

The girl continued to stir the mealies in the great iron cooking pot without answer, but Dorindi's wife turned on him swiftly. " Thou—chief of this village ! Chief of the apes that live in the hills ! You do not see the river until the water chokes thee, spotted toad ! "

" Be still, woman ! " commanded Dorindi—the courage of *pombe* was still coursing through his withered veins.

" Be still ? After such a show of slow wits ? Is it not the rule that the man who kills an elephant is entitled to one tusk ? "

" Yes. What then ? "

" Mpono bin Salimu is the most skilful hunter in this village. Had his plan been followed, he would have gained that tusk for a certainty. And an ivory tusk is more than ten goats to a father-in-law. Is it not, old tortoise ? Thy wits are awash in beer ! "

" That thought had escaped me," confessed Dorindi, his avaricious mind already translating the price of a tusk into terms of goats. " True, it would buy more than ten. "

" Aye, twice times ten, brainless ! And now that you know it, where is your plan to gain the stuff, cunning one ? " Her tone was scornful.

" I shall speak with Mpono. This is a serious matter, and one for discussion as between friends. "

His beady eyes surveyed his daughter critically and his spirits rose. Truly, by all African standards, her beauty was great—slim figure, smooth and rounded arms, her hair tightly braided into curls of the size of a finger. Dorindi felt that Mpono bin Salimu would forgive much to the father of such a girl.

His wife hitched her cotton *kisuto*\* closer about her thin body and opened her mouth for a further blasting diatribe. The chief picked up his short spear and stole discreetly towards the doorway. " I go to arrange this matter with Mpono," he said hastily.

Unfortunately the young man could not be found. His house was empty ; the place by the door, where Mpono was wont to preen himself for Arana's edification, was

tenantless. Dorindi approached an old man who squatted in the dust of the roadway.

His cautious inquiry brought no answer ; the ancient was deaf. " I seek Mpono bin Salimu ! " shouted the chief shrilly. " Where is he ? "

" Gone away ! " said the elder briefly. " Gone away ! And a rebellious dog who ought to be flogged with a *kiboko* ! " \*

Dorindi irritably surveyed the untidy village. Already the fires were being lighted, old women and children were hurrying from the *mashamba*† with bundles of wood for the contemplated cooking. From the huts came the grinding noise of spear-whetting ; now and again a young man, accoutred for the chase, would thrust his head into the open air to judge the height of the moon. The sun was almost set ; the village was shadowy in the dusk.

The chief was in despair. That he should lose so much wealth was unthinkable. Besides, his daughter wanted to marry Mpono bin Salimu—that had to be considered, too—and he dreaded the consequences should she be thwarted.

He stumbled back to his own house, peering anxiously into the gloom in his search for the young man. As he neared his hut he heard the shrill voice of his wife raised in denunciation of his folly. Rapidly he decided to wait in the village square and accost Mpono at the last moment, when all the young men were gathered together. Shuffling in dejection towards the fig tree, he searched his mind for arguments that might save his pride from Mpono's scorn. Enough, he thought, to say that he had changed his mind, that prudence forbade the risk of loss in such an emergency of hunger, and, for sugar to the pill, perhaps a gently-spoken hint that Mpono bin Salimu—the ivory being, of course, taken for granted—would be a most desirable son-in-law to Dorindi.

Well contented, he slumped in a heap beneath the fig tree, cursing his council of elders without much conviction. However, he could act alone now. All would yet be well. Leaning against the great trunk, he thought drowsily of his wife.

" Many men," he reflected " would have choked that woman and stilled the clacking of her tongue. I am glad I was not so cruel. What a mind for the hatching of a profitable venture ! The tongue like the

\* A cotton dress.

\* A rawhide whip.

† Fields.



sting of a scorpion, but the eye of a *tai\** to see an opportunity of prey!" Dorindi chuckled wickedly. His head sagged forward until his meagre beard touched his chest and he slept, the short spear dangling from his relaxed fingers.

He awoke to the sound of voices, sat upright, blinking sleepily. The place was deserted but for the elder he had seen near Mpono's house, who leant on a staff and talked aimlessly to himself. The voices had almost died away on the other side of the village.

"Have the young men gone, old one?" Dorindi was panic-stricken. "Have they gone?"

"Gone away," repeated the elder stupidly. "Gone away, chattering like a flock of parrots of the deeds they will do. Gone away!" He gazed at Dorindi from bleared eyes, and his jaw dropped as the chief ran rapidly across the square and disappeared.

Following the sound, Dorindi trotted heavily down the bush path. His breathing was laboured; he cursed the beer he had drunk in the heat of the sun. "Unwise!" he gasped, as he scrambled down the slope, dropped with a thud into the river-bed. "Unwise! That *pombe* may yet cost me a good ivory tusk!"

He clambered up the bank on the other side and brushed through a wide stretch of thin bush. Beyond it, he knew, lay the secluded thicket that the elephant had taken for a home; just beyond that again the young men would already be preparing torches and drums to stampede the bull towards the cunningly concealed trap.

He stopped to consider his best course. Somehow he must reach Mpono bin Salimu and change the plan of attack. If he worked round to the right in a wide curve, he might be too late. If he held straight on, he might run into the beast. A thought occurred to him. If he beat hard enough on his shield of dried hide, he might attract the attention of the young warriors.

Yes, that was undoubtedly the wisest course. Dorindi grasped the spear by the head, thumped the shield lustily, and trotted forward.

Then from the sheer blackness of the bush came the thumping roll of fifty drums; a long line of torches flickered and bobbed, like gigantic fireflies. The wailing chorus of the beaters, "Ai-ee! Ai-ee! Ai-ee!"

swept down to him on the evening breeze. He stopped again, peering into the night and banging his shield with all his strength.

"The drive has already begun," he reflected. Then a fearful possibility crept into his mind. "I am in the track of the bull! I will be killed!" His legs quivered with excitement; the noise of his beating rose to a rolling fusillade.

It was vain, for the young men did not hear the noise. Absorbed in their task, encouraged by the prospect of a full meal of fresh meat, they were marching in a semicircle to the elephant's lair. Dorindi, fascinated by the steady approach of the lights, gasped in fear.

"I must flee before the beast destroys me!" he resolved. With an eager eye he estimated the distance that lay between himself and the beaters, to find his shortest course to safety. His lips were compressed, and cold sweat trickled down his face.

Then, without warning, came the rending crash of a broken branch, and the elephant appeared not fifteen paces from his side, a ghostly shadow in the darkness. The beast ambled forward, dipping on his lame foreleg at each stride. Dorindi, in a paroxysm of terror, smote his shield. He saw the elephant's ears move to and fro against the sky.

The huge head swung from side to side, seeking the cause of the strange noise. Then, with a dipping heave of his forequarters, the bull plunged round, trumpeted loudly, and thundered away towards the irregular line of beaters.

"They will turn him! Praise be to Allah that he did not attack me!" Dorindi took a firm grip of his weapons and ran in the opposite direction, his flying feet tearing through thorny shrubs in a passionate desire to reach companionship.

As he fled, a babel arose behind him—deep shouts that rose to an uproar. The headman did not slacken his pace. Head down, he crashed into a broad figure who stood beside a tree. A hand shot out and seized his shoulder. Dorindi was swung round with a jerk and looked up, to meet the scowling glare of Mpono bin Salimu.

"What is it?" demanded the bewildered young man. "What has happened?"

"Leave me go!" said Dorindi. "It is forbidden to touch the person of a chief. Mpono, I came to warn you that the plan was changed, but was too late."

"But what is the noise? Where is the beast?"

\* Vulture.



"I came up the path towards you, beating on my shield. The bull came near, driven by your people, and the noise frightened him. He fled!"

"You mean that you turned him? He fled! A fine chief! The elephant lost because you beat on a shield like a foolish child with a toy!"

"It was necessary to save myself. Am I to be slain by a beast?"

A crowd of young warriors came crashing through the long grass, panting heavily. "The beast is gone and a man is hurt! He has gone south to the hills!" came the excited chorus.

Mpono bin Salimu frowned at Dorindi. "Thus our trouble has gone for nothing. Who will catch the beast now? Perhaps the wise men of the council will make another plan? Bah!"

The chief turned away in offended silence and strode off in the direction of the village. Groups of young men gathered from the bush, the torches were extinguished, and the angry young warriors followed him.

The women were still busy about their fires, and heard the story in stupefied amazement. Then, when the extent of the calamity had dawned on them, they broke into lamentation. Dorindi, seeking out his elders under the council tree, strove to ignore their wailings, while he explained at great length his interference with the settled plan.

"And, all talk finished, it remains for us to starve?" queried the oldest fretfully. "What sort of chief are you, Dorindi, that you behave like a foolish woman, now of this mind, now of that?"

Dorindi shrugged his shoulders impatiently and went to find Mpono, who might become an ally when he understood everything. He grabbed the arm of the young man with desperate firmness and led him unwillingly to the hut where Arana and her mother crouched by the fire.

"Listen to me, Mpono," he implored. "Your plan was the better one. We talked it over in this house and agreed. It was to hasten your marriage to Arana that I set out—a worthy errand!—well knowing that the man who kills an elephant is entitled to a tusk."

"Ten goats was the agreement. A tusk is more than the goats," protested the young man.

"A tusk would be accepted. Am I the man to grieve my daughter by squabbling over such a matter? Her will is mine. A

tusk would suffice." Dorindi's anxiety showed in the trembling of his lips.

"As well it might!" grunted Mpono. "But who knows where the beast may be? This should have been foreseen. It was a fool's trick to walk straight to the den. We walked round him."

"A fine chief!" cut in Dorindi's wife scornfully. "Aye, chief of the half-witted! Thumping on a shield like a dancing-girl!"

"Quiet, woman! Mpono's skill is well known; all is not yet hopeless." Dorindi's tone dropped to a wheedling softness.

The youth hesitated; looked about for Arana. She had gone. Mpono bin Salimu shook his head dolefully and walked away. The chief, looking after him, picked up his spear and chuckled.

"We will have the tusk of that brute!" he exulted. "That was cleverly managed. I put the matter to him with such skill; now he must trek after the elephant—he has no other choice."

"Peace, scheming ape!" interjected his wife. "Oh, tortoise, who slept under a tree while the prize was lost! A brave chief! A fire would singe thy beard before thou felt the heat! Dolt! *Mshenzi!*" The old woman seized a brand from the fire and thrust it into her startled husband's face. "Pah!" she spat disgustedly.

## II.

Mpono bin Salimu trotted on through the thick thorn bush, following close on the tracks of the big elephant. For three days he had kept to the trail; just ahead of him the bull pushed on for the shelter of the hills. It was unpleasant work, for the rains had begun at last, and Mpono was alternately soaked to the skin and dried by the blazing heat of the sun.

The weight of the food at his belt and the weapons strapped to his shoulders pressed more and more heavily. The ground was rough and the going hard, but Mpono, obsessed by the prospect of the capture, felt no fatigue.

Passing a swampy patch of ground, he stopped to examine the spoor more closely. The imprint of the three sound legs had become deeper as the injured leg gave trouble and the bull trod more lightly on it. Presently, he concluded, the elephant would have to lie up for rest.

The foothills were a blue-grey line on the horizon, perhaps two days' trek ahead. Mpono straightened his back, hitched his



burden to a more comfortable position, and resumed his journey.

Then he lost the trail. In alarm he retraced his steps and found that the beast had turned sharply. The tracks led him down into a

"Here he will stay," thought Mpono. "I will rest a while and consider the matter of the killing."

He crouched in the long grass and ate a handful of mealies from the pouch



"Dorindi flung up his hands in a dramatic gesture. 'Foolishness! I leave it to the elders, to be settled according to their will.'"

hollow, along the bottom of a narrow valley into a swamp. Within a clump of trees he heard a grumbling and the rending of branches. Thankfully he threw down the bundle and crawled cautiously forward on the leeward side.

by his side. While he rested, a patch formed in the sky, no bigger than a man's hand. Mpono watched it grow bigger and darker, until the sun was blotted out and the rain descended in straight, spouting streams. He caught



water in the blanket he carried, drank greedily.

"Please Allah that bull does not move on to the hills!" he thought wearily.

When the sun was a blood-red disc on the horizon, Mpono bin Salimu crawled stiffly from his hiding-place and worked his way down the stream to explore, hoping to find a pool where the elephant might be trusted to drink and bathe.

Here I will build a pit," he decided, clambering up the slope to fetch his weapons.

It was a difficult task. For two days he laboured before the place was fit for his purpose, every now and again crawling back to the thicket, keeping watch that the elephant did not escape him.

He regretted now that he was alone. Better to have waited until the dawn and brought a friend or two; better to have resisted Dorindi's arguments until his judgment was cooler. It was too late now. Alone he had come and alone he must work, or go back to the village and confess



"From ten goats to an elephant tusk is too great a step. I will pay ten goats only."

In his search he came on a waterfall, four paces broad and the height of three men in depth. "Ah, here, perhaps, a trap might be contrived," he speculated, "but it would cost much labour."

Mpono slid cautiously over the edge and dropped to the pool below. It was flat rock, solid enough to bear the weight of a herd of elephants.

his failure. The thought of the villagers' ironic laughter spurred his aching frame to greater efforts.

Mpono dug out the sloping bank on each side of the fall, making it straight and beyond the climbing powers of an injured elephant. The soil he heaped on the fourth side to form a pit, after he had chopped wood and made a little tunnel so that the stream



might flow unhindered through his earthen embankment. It would not do to drown the beast—drowned flesh makes bad food.

This finished, he spent a day cutting leafy branches and arranging them on each side of the fall, an artificial grove that might well be taken for real growth. When it was done, he prowled round, examining his handiwork.

It was quite satisfactory, even in its primitive way. Coming down the valley, nothing could be seen but a thick patch of bush, broken by a small opening. On each side of the screen the sides of the valley rose upwards steeply. Looking through the gap, there was visible a smooth floor of red soil—earth which had been carefully sprinkled on a light wickerwork frame. The elephant would suspect nothing; if he entered the gap, he would crash through the flimsy floor and fall into the pit.

Worried by the possibility of failure, Mpono bin Salimu lowered himself into the trap for a final examination. The bull would not get out, once he had entered. The rocky side of the fall was worn to a velvet smoothness; on each side Mpono had undercut the bank. Opposite the entrance was the embankment he had built. If the bull tried that way of escape, he would find Mpono waiting for him, spear in hand.

He crawled out again into the sunshine, ate the last of his mealies, and lay down in the shade to await the night. Near at hand the elephant trampled noisily, tearing branches from the trees.

The afternoon wore on, and a blinding rainstorm soaked Mpono. He shivered feverishly in the dampness of the grass. Then the sun began to set, and stars glimmered faintly in the evening sky.

With the approach of darkness, the elephant became more active. Mpono drew nearer. When the beast went down to the stream to drink, his great adventure would begin.

The youth sank further into cover, fumbled for his flint, and prepared his torch with trembling fingers. A hunting lion roared far off in the distance, and Mpono shuddered. These too curious brutes might betray his presence—please Allah they would keep away! The howling died away gradually; the night was quiet save for the croaking of the frogs in the swamp and the swish of the breeze.

Mpono bin Salimu's nerves were on edge while he watched the thicket. The minutes dragged into hours, each one an eternity.

At last the branches were parted, and he saw the bull's head. The trunk curled up, a branch cracked. Evidently the brute was quiet and did not suspect his presence. Mpono sighed thankfully, screwed up his courage to make the first move in his attack.

He moved round the patch, dropped into cover, and lighted his torch. Waving it gently, he thumped softly on the shield strapped to his left arm. The beast ambled a few paces nearer to the stream and stood, waving his trunk. Mpono extinguished the light and followed. Steadily he crept along, keeping within a hundred paces while the bull wandered towards the bank.

Then Mpono sprang erect and ran in a semicircle until he was in front of the bull, who had begun to walk away from the trap. He flung himself to the ground, struck a spark, and blew the torch into flame. The beast shied at the light and trotted lumberingly away, grunting uneasily.

Mpono stayed still, waiting. To startle the bull would be fatal to his plans; he must be driven gently. One stampede would mean the end of the hunting, for Mpono had no food and could not follow. As the elephant swung his trunk, the tusks gleamed. The ivory was good. Mpono's heart beat hard in the anxiety that filled him.

So with infinite patience he stalked, first this way, then that, working gradually nearer to the trap. When the beast was at last within a few paces of the gap in the screen, he turned obstinately and began to hobble back in his tracks. The hunter, trembling with the apprehension of failure, thumped his shield until it rolled like a war-drum. The elephant threw up his head, trumpeted in alarm, and turned again towards the trap.

Mpono followed, crouched low. Stopping a moment, he relighted the firebrand. Almost blinded by the grass, he had difficulty in locating the position of his quarry. The great beast halted, raised his trunk, and roared his angry bewilderment to the skies. He was now within ten paces of the gap that led to the trap.

"He is already afraid. I must trust to chance!" muttered Mpono aloud. "Please Allah he flee in the right direction!" He twirled the torch between his hands until it spouted white sparks. "Now is my time!" thought Mpono as the elephant saw him and trumpeted again.

The youth took a deep breath and sprang forward with a yell, rushing headlong at



the beast, who swung away from the apparition. Mpono jerked the torch above his head, poised it for an instant, and threw it full in the face of the elephant. The animal uttered a roar of terror, which was cut short as he dropped his trunk and charged downstream.

Mpono watched him. Straight through the opening the bull galloped. There came a tremendous crash and a scream from the pit. Mpono ran forward. The elephant was trapped.

"Now for the killing!" He went forward, the cracking of twigs sounding loudly in the sudden silence which had fallen, scrambled up the bank and let himself slide on the embankment of his pit. With caution he hoisted himself, relit the torch, and peered downwards.

The big bull screamed again in rage and twisted himself round in the narrow space. His trunk thrust suddenly into view like a grasping arm. Mpono jerked back just as it brushed his head. Grasping his long spear, he stabbed blindly into the darkness.

He heard the beast's grunts and laboured breathing. His blade touched flesh, and he drove it home with a lunge of his body. Again came the furious scream; again the trunk swung past him. The youth drew back, searching amongst his weapons for a suitable spear.

He chose the biggest and sharpest, a fearful weapon, taller in the shaft than the tallest man, with a blade longer than Mpono's arm. He stretched forward until his head was over the edge of the pit. He heard the laboured breathing as the bull tried to regain his feet.

The elephant had recovered from his fall. Now, striving to escape from his prison, he hoisted himself on his hind feet. Mpono saw the huge head outlined against the sky, saw the waving trunk sweep round for a tree to grip.

The elephant heard him move and turned towards him. Mpono saw the mouth open, beneath it the soft skin of the throat. He poised the long spear, gripped the shaft in both hands, and drove it forward with all his strength. His weight drove it home; the elephant sagged and fell back into the pit, a queer bubbling noise coming from the darkness. Mpono seized another spear and crouched on the earthen wall, waiting for another chance.

It did not come. All night he stood guard, while the noises in the pit died away to silence. In the first rays of the dawn he

saw a red trickle in the water of the stream. Emboldened by the stillness of the beast, he hung head downwards and thrust his spear into the flesh. There was not so much as a tremor. The big bull was dead.

### III.

THE tusks of the big elephant lay on the village square, surrounded by a clamorous throng. Under the huge fig tree, shaded from the heat of the sun, the council of elders listened drowsily to Dorindi's eloquence.

"This matter is to be settled by the council," he announced grandly. "Here is my case. The whole matter of the marriage between my daughter Arana and Mpono bin Salimu had long been arranged. At first he was to pay me ten goats. Now I say that he should pay me a tusk from the elephant he has killed. And he refuses, offering the goats only. The council is asked to settle this question."

"Ten goats was the agreement, and ten goats will I pay. A tusk is too much!" Mpono's voice took up the argument stoutly.

"In the beginning there was no talk of elephants," retorted Dorindi, "else that would have been the price. A father is entitled to fix the price of his daughter. That is *dasturi*."\*

The aged councillors chewed betel in judicial reflection, waiting until each side of the dispute had been heard.

Mpono bin Salimu grunted his annoyance. "It is *dasturi* that the dowry should be fixed once for all. From ten goats to an elephant tusk is too great a step. I will pay ten goats only."

On the edge of the crowd hovered Dorindi's wife, restlessly passing from the gleaming ivory to the scene of the court. Her lips moved in inaudible curses, directed at the head of her unconscious husband.

As Mpono finished speaking, Dorindi flung up his hands in a dramatic gesture. "Foolishness! I leave it to the elders, to be settled according to their will. They will see that the rights of a father are sacred."

"I am willing," said Mpono bin Salimu laconically.

The oldest of the council debated with his brothers. Then, throwing out his quid of betel, he held up his thin, wavering arm for silence. The villagers gathered about the tree, gazing in curiosity.

\* Immemorial custom.



"The council says," he mumbled, "that they have conferred together. This is the finding. According to *dasturi*, it is right that the father should set the price of the dowry. There we agree with Dorindi."

The chief capered in his glee, and his eyes sparkled; but the old man motioned him to quietness. "But the price, being once set, cannot be altered. There we agree with Mpono bin Salimu, though he lacks in proper respect for his betters."

He glanced about him with working lips, then, recollecting himself, proceeded. "Therefore the daughter of Dorindi, Arana, will marry Mpono bin Salimu at a price of ten goats, to be paid before the ceremony. Thus says the *dasturi* of our people!" He sat down heavily.

Dorindi's mouth fell open in his astonishment. He had lost his case! The fact trickled slowly through to full realisation. He, the chief of the village, was to have for a son-in-law a young man whose wealth was ten times his own. The ivory had escaped him! Dorindi gazed helplessly about him.

Then a shrill voice pierced the fog of his

thoughts, and his wife, her toothless jaws working, elbowed her way through the crowd.

"Oh, clever man who would gain the tusk of an elephant by his cunning!" she screamed. "Oh, schemer! Who scared the beast in the first hunting? You old mud-head! You old dolt! *Mshenzi kabisa!*" \*

Fury gleamed in her aged eyes. Dorindi walked towards his hut, trying to ignore the tornado that raged at his back.

Arana, squatting in the shade of the house and smilingly brooding over her approaching marriage, was brought to earth by the approach of her squabbling parents.

The naked small boy who bore Dorindi's *pombe* jar sprang from the shelter of the eaves and offered his master refreshment. Dorindi, chief of the village, turned his face from the sun and drank deeply. His wife watched him, her mouth opened, she gulped and closed it again.

For once in her long life she had no words befitting the occasion.

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\* Utterly useless.



## THE DARK BIRD.

**A** DARK bird, through the glimmer  
Of morning, suddenly flew  
Across the fountain, as dimmer  
The starry descants grew.

There was one pure note, past capture,  
For the bird's cry passed with the bird;  
Was it a mere thrush-rapture?  
Or was it a secret word?

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.



# THE OPPORTUNIST

By D. E. FIFE

ILLUSTRATED BY MIGUEL MACKINLAY

"**W**OMEN are every bit as brave as men!" cried Miss Greer vigorously. "It's ridiculous to pretend men have the monopoly of courage."

Acquiescent murmurs from the feminine half of the party, seated at dinner, greeted her words, and, emboldened, she challenged their support.

"Isn't it?" she asked them eagerly.

"Absurd!" "Too silly for words!"

"Of course we are," were some of the replies, and there rose a babel of voices supporting both points of view, the women shrilly declaiming their own sex's equality in this as in most other attributes, the men vainly endeavouring to demonstrate to them how fallible were their views.

The house-party at Tyll Hall consisted of ten people, five women and five men, the Judsons and their guests, the Pimms, the Knowsleys, the Bartons, Miss Greer and Captain Ainslie.

"Now, look here," said Judson, seizing the opportunity when a lull fell on the noisy crew, "take burglary. Adela thinks I'm fearfully fussy about insisting on the shutters all being barred and the doors bolted; but if anyone did get in here, she'd be the first to hide her head under the bed-clothes."

"I wouldn't!" shouted Mrs. Judson in feverish indignation. "You *are* mean, Tim. You know I wouldn't."

"I'd like to see you take any active steps to eject him," said her husband, in that irritating way of husbands, as though possessed of certain knowledge of what their wives will say or do in any conceivable circumstances.

Mrs. Pimm took up the cudgels on her behalf. She was a pretty little American with just enough accent to make her voice attractive, though she firmly believed her tones to be completely innocent of any clue to her origin.

"Mr. Judson, it's too bad!" she said.

"We're none of us equal in brawn and muscle to *you*, of course, but what we lack in weight we make up for in calmness and cunning, and you wouldn't find us wanting if an emergency did arise. Of course we wouldn't be so silly as to *fight* a burglar, but we wouldn't be in the least *afraid* of one."

"Yes, indeed," cried Mrs. Barton, "the women of to-day are heaps braver than the men, really! They have more imagination"—cries of "No, no!" from the men—"they *feel* more. The woman who screamed at a mouse is as extinct as the Dodo. Everything's more difficult for us because of our finer organisation, yet every day we face all sorts of disagreeable things—cooks and——"

"If anyone did break in here," said Judson, smiling in a superior way, "you'd all scream the place down."

Mrs. Judson rose. "You're only trying to annoy us, Tim," she said. "I think it's no use our prolonging this discussion. We shan't convince them by words. Let's hope that some day it will fall to our lot to be able to show them by deeds what a miserable set of worms they are, compared with us."

The ladies went laughing from the room, leaving the men to finish their port.

"I say," suggested Captain Ainslie, as Luker, the butler, brought in the coffee, "wouldn't it be fun to fake a burglary for them, just to see what they *would* do? We'd prove their bravery then."

"Good idea," agreed Pimm.

"It wouldn't frighten them, would it, though?" said Tim Judson rather uneasily. "Luker, get out some of the '36 brandy. Knowsley, I want you to try this. It's good stuff."

"Not if what they say is true," said Ainslie. "Seems you can't frighten them. Of course we wouldn't do anything violent. Just creep in and take all their necklaces and things while we're supposed to be playing billiards. I can see their faces at breakfast to-morrow!"



"It would be very easy to do it," said Knowsley tentatively.

"Yes, and it's not as if they'd be asleep. They'd know they'd only to ring or call, and they could get us at once."

They were all taken with the idea. The

"And, besides," said Ainslie, "it'll only be a joke. If they were at all alarmed, we'd just tell 'em at once who we were."

The question of who should impersonate the burglar was soon settled. It was felt



"Well, I guess you'd better help yourself," she remarked placidly. "Shut the door when you go out, please."

ladies had been very superior. Only Tim Judson and Knowsley were dubious, but the others pointed out the fact that their womenkind, boasting of their fortitude, had expressed the fervent hope that the chance to exhibit it would occur.

that Judson himself must take this duty. It was his house, he knew his way about better than anyone else, and if attacked he could find cover more readily than the others.

"Because, if they *aren't* afraid, we won't



give ourselves away, of course," said Ainslie.

"That'll be a bit difficult in the morning," Knowsley objected. "How shall we get the jewellery back?"

"Why, yes, of course, Luker. What is it? Say it here, if it's not anything you want to see me about alone."

"Well, madam, the fact is—and I hope that you will not consider I am going beyond my duty, madam—I overheard a conversation among the gentlemen."

Mrs. Judson's face grew grave. It was extraordinary of Luker to speak of what he overheard. One rather looked on a good butler as being practically earless on occasions, and yet, when one thought of it, they couldn't exactly help an occasional eavesdrop.

"Go on, Luker," she said rather coldly.

"Well, madam, the subject of their conversation was a joke they intend playing on you and the other ladies, madam."

"Upon us!" cried Mrs. Judson. She now beamed upon the butler. "What is it, then, Luker?" she inquired, her pretty face wreathed in smiles. "This is interesting!"

The bright eyes of all the party were focussed upon Luker's immovable features.

"I thought I'd better let you know, madam,

so that you might be forearmed. They are going to do a mock burglary, madam, to-night, when you imagine they are playing billiards."

A shriek of delighted laughter greeted this. "I thought I'd better let you know, madam. I hope I was right."

"Quite right," said Mrs. Judson emphatically, and Luker left the hall as imperturbable as when he had entered.

"He's priceless, that man!" she said. "He's so respectful, and yet he's got a huge sense of humour, I'm sure. He's the best butler we've ever had. Well, what shall we do by way of reception?"



"The interloper made no reply."

"Oh, we'll manage that all right," said Pimm airily.

"I wonder if it's quite playing the game?" suggested Tim Judson, and there followed much discussion.

Meanwhile the ladies, their gay frocks making a splash of colour against the old panelled walls, were grouped round the big hall fireplace, drinking their coffee and chattering happily, unconscious of the trick in store for them, till Luker, his face impassive as a mask, entered quietly and, stepping up to Mrs. Judson, said respectfully: "If you please, madam, might I speak to you?"



"I think we should simply fly at them and attack them," suggested Mrs. Barton pugnaciously, and Miss Greer agreed; but Mrs. Knowsley felt that locked doors would be more of a sell. Miss Pimm, looking thoughtful, her pretty chin in her hand, had another suggestion—she thought they should put out all their jewellery and take no notice of the thing at all.

"Of course we must let them know we are awake," she said, "but go on reading, or whatever we like, as if it were quite a usual thing to happen. That would be *such* a snub for them."

With this Mrs. Judson agreed, but she pointed out that their lights must be subdued, for recognition might be awkward. "A shaded lamp," she said, "just to give a dim outline."

The ladies retired unusually early that night, and hastened upstairs to set the stage for the coming drama. Little giggles and stifled laughter came from their rooms as all together they assisted each other to place their necklaces, rings, watches and brooches out on their dressing-tables as if carelessly thrown there. When all was ready, they undressed and got into bed.

"It does seem queer," said little Mrs. Pimm, pulling the sheet up to her chin, as Mrs. Judson, saying "Good night!" stood at her door.

They had all dressed themselves in their daintiest nighties and most fascinating boudoir caps, and Mrs. Pimm looked absurdly young and distractingly pretty, her eyes dancing with the expectation of the coming fun.

Miss Greer's room was next door, and they had left the communicating door open, to whisper eagerly to each other now and then.

"There's the click of billiard balls," hissed Mrs. Pimm; "they won't be long now."

"O-o-oh!" cried Miss Greer, presently adding in a half-strangled whisper: "Oh, here they come!"

It was certainly true. Someone was in the passage. Tyll Hall, the Judsons' house, was an Elizabethan dwelling, and the bedrooms all opened upon a long passage punctuated by high casement windows. Someone was obviously coming along it softly, cautiously. Miss Greer's door, the first, opened quietly. A tiny gasp escaped her, in spite of herself, as a tall figure crept stealthily in and made straight for the dressing-table.

Miss Greer, for all her protestations, could think of literally nothing to do or say, and

lay listening to the thumping of her own heart. Even though she knew it was only a joke, it seemed so odd to have a person creep into your room in this cat-like way. Mrs. Pimm, however, was more successful. As her door moved she called cheerfully:

"Come in! What do you want?"

"Your jewels," said a gruff voice.

"Well, I guess you'd better help yourself," she remarked placidly. "Shut the door when you go out, please."

The interloper made no reply.

"He can't act for nuts," she said to herself. "Wonder which he is? Leave me my pendant, if you don't mind," she said. She was delighted with this touch.

The "stranger" did not tarry long, but, removing the glittering collection spread out for him, he left very quietly and obediently shut the door.

"Say, Sally," called Mrs. Pimm, "wasn't he a silly mutt?" She sat up in bed. "I believe it's Ainslie."

"I'm sure it's not," said Sally Greer indignantly; "I should have known him. I could just see the shape. It's more like Mr. Pimm."

"Oh, it wasn't Joe!" said Mrs. Pimm. "I wonder how the others are doing?"

Mrs. Knowsley's room was next, and she tried a different tack. "I know what you're doing," she said. "You reafter my jewellery, but I don't think I need worry, as the house is well guarded. There are five *very* brave men inside and six fierce dogs outside. So you can go ahead."

She almost laughed audibly. "Very brave men!" she repeated to herself.

Mrs. Barton received the intruder in silence, but she rolled over and sighed, so that he should not doubt her wakefulness nor her callousness; but Mrs. Judson—as previously arranged between them—produced from under her pillow one of the children's water pistols and pointed it at him, saying in a deep, threatening voice: "Go at once, or I shall fire!"

Her secret amusement overcame her so much that the hand holding the pistol wobbled shockingly; but the burglar showed no sign of fear, made his usual scoop of gems, and retreated to the door. They gave him two minutes in which to rejoin his friends, and then they ran helter-skelter into each other's rooms, laughing and talking all at once, excited, delighted, and each explaining to the others exactly what her own sentiments had been.

"It wasn't very sporting of him to take



my pendant, after all," said Mrs. Pimm ruefully.

"But I don't think they can say we weren't *brave*," said Mrs. Judson, pistol in hand, with a yawn, as, hearing the billiard room door opening, they prepared to scuttle back to their beds, for it had been decided to feign slumber on the arrival of the delinquents.

"Won't they look fools in the morning?"

But in the morning the joke fell very flat, for though the ladies hastened down to breakfast, their heads full of the events of the night before, and all agog to talk about the joke, their husbands were singularly quiet on the subject. They none of them showed by the turn of an eyelash that their elaborate plot had failed.

At last, when they had reached the marmalade stage, Mrs. Judson, exasperated beyond measure, remarked with a twinkle in her eye: "There was a burglar here last night, Tim. Did you catch him?"

"What's the joke?" asked her husband mildly.

This was too bad.

"Well, you are a set of mean things!" she cried. "You might at least confess you were wrong, and give us back our jewellery."

"What do you mean?" he asked, and the other men glanced at her inquiringly.

"Don't pretend," she said. "Now, won't you admit you were wrong? Aren't we brave?"

They were met by bewildered looks.

"Why, the burglary you got up!" cried Mrs. Pimm.

"What burglary? We *were* going to do one, but in the end we decided not to frighten you. But how did you find out about it?"

A sudden terrible conviction came to Mrs. Judson. They didn't know! Could Luker have been mistaken? If so, who had played the joke?

"I'll ring for Luker," she said.

But instead of Luker came Lizzie, the housemaid.

"I rang for Luker," said Mrs. Judson.

"Please, ma'am," said Lizzie, pale and wide-eyed, "we can't find Luker, and," she added, in an awed whisper, "his bed has not been slept in."



## THE SEARCH.

**S**URELY, oh, surely, somewhere still,  
Beyond that house, behind that hill,  
The thing I seek may yet be found,  
The place may yet be holy ground.

Sometime, oh, surely, still sometime,  
There shall again be days sublime,  
There shall be hours that stir to tears,  
And rapture as in vanished years.

E. VINE HALL.





#### YOUTHFUL CYNICISM.

SHE: Do you believe in long engagements?

HE: Well, I suppose you get the advantage this way—the longer the engagement, the shorter the married life—what?

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### THE MILLIONAIRE'S GIFT.

By Grace Fordham-Spence.

ONCE Herbert Judkings (now K.C.) used to deplore the rarity of gratitude, but now his feelings on the subject are somewhat changed. Years ago he won what looked a hopeless case. Thanks to his youth (comparative) and inexperience (superlative), he asked the plaintiff some rash questions which caused him and his case to collapse. When Herbert told Theophilus Brown about it—he was the chief man in the chambers—he said that it was “a beastly fluke.” Young Judkings murmured something about “intuition,” at which Brown laughed. However, when he talked next day about “intuition” to the solicitor who had instructed him, the member of the “lower branch” beamed pleasantly—quite a jolly fellow, that solicitor—and thanked him heartily for winning the case, saying that the lay client was most valuable to him, being enormously rich and very litigious. Whilst they were talking, the clerk brought in a little parcel, and the solicitor said: “Why, that’s addressed in old Hanson’s handwriting! I expect it’s a present. Old Hanson is awfully generous.”

First there was a letter, rather uncouth in phraseology, expressing thanks for the forensic triumph—two r’s in the forensic—and begging

the young barrister to accept the enclosed as a *momentum* of his gratitude, and there was a P.S. to the effect that he hoped that the *momentum* would always be worn.

“A self-made man,” said the solicitor hastily. “An awfully good sort, who would take a case about a penny tram fare to the House of Lords.”

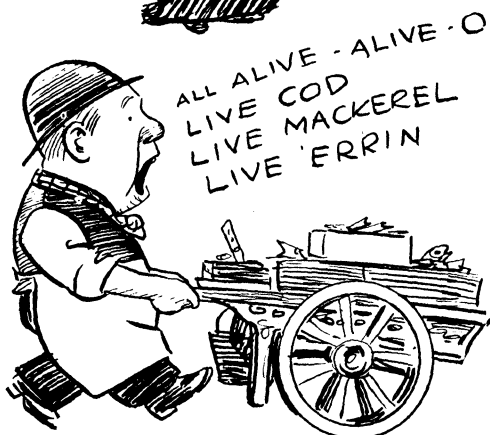
“Self-made English, too,” remarked the junior, opening the little box. And lo! a ring with one enormous diamond gleaming tremendously, a stone almost as big as a filbert.

He gasped.

“What a splendid gift!” said the solicitor. But Herbert pointed out that he could not wear it—the thing was too conspicuous—and the solicitor answered that it would be a great advertisement, since everybody could be told how it was won. And he was very firm about the wearing of the ring, lest otherwise a valuable client might be offended, so Herbert gave way and promised.

They chaffed him cruelly about the ring at lunch in the Middle Temple Hall. His wife admired it and said it would look beautiful if set as a brooch; and she did not quite appreciate his refusal to give it to her, and hardly seemed to believe in the grounds for refusal. During the next fortnight Judkings





"SHALL DI  
SWITCH OFF  
TARGE ?"

"AYE LET'S GO  
OUT AND LISTEN  
TO T OLD  
NIGHTINGALE"



W. G. 1930

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

AS THE NOTES OF THE NIGHTINGALE HAVE BEEN BROADCASTED FOR THE BENEFIT OF LONDON LISTENERS-IN, WHY NOT BROADCAST THE SONGSTERS OF LONDON FOR THE BENEFIT OF COUNTRY PEOPLE?



had rather a trying time with the ring, the most painful moment being when a leading junior begged him not to shake his gorgeous ring at him. Still, work came tumbling in splendidly from the solicitor, and the stuff gownsman began to get accustomed to the thing. It stuck to him night and day—he was regaining flesh at the time after an attack of influenza.

About a month later came a sort of climax, for the Judge in Chambers brutally remarked that if he was not dazzled by the brilliance of Mr. Judkings's arguments, he was not likely to be dazzled by the brilliance of his diamonds.

When he was reading his paper during lunch at a teashop—for he had ceased to care about eating in the splendid Hall of the Middle

serene'; it was given to me by Hanson, the millionaire, who was killed to-day."

The assistant called out: "Father, come here and look at this!" An old man with a black skull-cap appeared: his face had an air of incredible wisdom.

"What's that?" asked the assistant.

The old man examined the ring under a microscope after placing it on a sheet of white paper.

"That," said the old man, with a creaky voice, "that's German—worth two or three pounds."

"Old Hanson gave it to the gent," remarked the assistant.

"Ah," remarked the old man, with a wintry smile, "he was fond of a bargain—trusted to



WAIT AND SEE!

MRS. NEWLYWED: Oh, George, you left the kitchen door open and the draught has shut my cookery book, so now I haven't the faintest idea what it is I'm cooking.

Temple—Herbert came upon a paragraph entitled "Shocking Death of a Millionaire," and learned that old Hanson had been run over. Joy at the thought of now getting rid of the ring almost overcame his sorrow at the injury to his professional prospects. After lunch he went into a jeweller's, and the shop assistant quickly cut through the ring with a file. A moment later he tested the metal.

"Why, it's real gold!" he said, with an air of astonishment.

"You don't suppose they'd mount a stone like that in brass," Herbert replied wrathfully.

The assistant laughed. "A stone like that? It's not worth more than the metal."

"It's a splendid brilliant 'of purest ray

his own judgment, too—but I did not think they would have planted such a fake as that on him. We will make you no charge for our trifling trouble," he continued, with loathsome amiability.

When Judkings told him of the discovery, the solicitor mentioned that he had always felt doubtful about the stone, but hadn't liked to say so; and, strangely enough, his wife made the same remark, and, what is more, all his friends and the men in the Hall with one accord said that they had never been satisfied about its genuineness, but hadn't liked to hurt his feelings by casting doubts. And this shows that there is a great deal more delicacy of feeling in people than is generally imagined.





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Supper, too, is a delicious, appetizing, satisfying meal very quickly and easily prepared when you serve Puffed Rice or Puffed Wheat. Neither needs to be cooked. Serve each just as it is with sugar and cream, milk or fresh fruit.

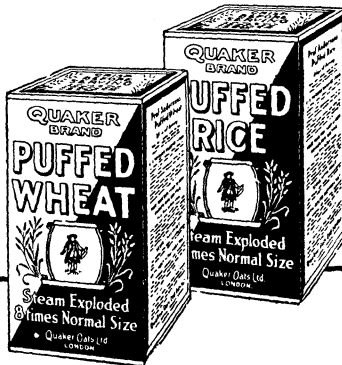
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OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME.

By Gilbert Davis.

THE trouble started through Beryl bringing a copy of "Beautiful Homes" into the house. Beryl is my wife, and I had always found her a very satisfactory one until the arrival of the aforementioned periodical in our abode.

Beryl says she bought it, but as it was the end of the month, and knowing her usual financial state at such a time, I am more inclined to the belief that she annexed it from the dentist's waiting-room.

Now, I had always imagined that we had a very nice home, and I had always understood that Beryl shared my views on the subject—in fact, I am sure that she did; but that wretched builder's budget has altered everything.

It was about three days after Beryl had brought the magazine home. I was sitting in front of the fire in my slippers, when Beryl perched herself on the edge of my chair and thrust a printed page in front of me. I found myself gazing at a photograph beneath which was the legend "A dining-room of distinction."

"Have we," demanded Beryl, "a dining-room of distinction?"

"It's distinctly a dining-room," I answered, "though rich people do occasionally take it for the linen cupboard!"

"Don't try to be funny!" she snapped, and left me in a huff.

Well, that was the start of things. When I came home next evening, after having a wash I made a bee-line for what the Americans call the "Ea's Depôt." I halted astonished in the doorway. A strange picture frieze had found its way round the walls. China plates hung here and there, and futuristic curtains decorated the once lace-clad windows.

Beryl smiled proudly. "There, isn't it nice? The paper says that the illustration gives a distinctive yet restful treatment for a dining-room. I've copied it almost exactly."

"Restful!" I screamed. "Restful! Who wants to be restful in a dining-room? It's a place for energy, not rest!"

However, under Beryl's blandishments, I quietened down. It was there I made a mistake. If I had put my foot down right away, the whole trouble might have been

stopped; but, encouraged by my lack of resistance, Beryl went ahead. Our dining-room of distinction was followed by a well-balanced and compact design for the hall, and a few days afterwards a simple yet dignified scheme for the sitting-room came into being. I ask you, who wants a dignified sitting-room?

I was getting pretty exasperated by this time. The whole house was upside down, but it was a scheme most suitable for the conversion of the backyard to a thing of beauty that finished me.

I went outside one dark evening to fetch



A DISTINCTION WITH A DIFFERENCE.

GUSHING YOUNG LADY: Oh, do tell me—do you take all your characters from life?

DISTINGUISHED ARTIST (bored to exasperation): Madam, I am a novelist—not an epidemic!

something from the toolshed. I first tripped up on a rustic tree-stump, slid violently down an imitation rockery on my face, and finished up by burying my front teeth in a home-made sundial.

For some time I lay counting the stars, and apostrophising the poet who penned the line "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever." Then I returned indoors and told Beryl exactly what I thought of her.



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She has now gone home to her parents. Meanwhile my time is divided between putting arnica on my bruises and putting the house straight.



THE debating society met in the little school-house, and the question for discussion was: "Resolved, that the works published under the name of William Shakespeare were really written by Lord Bacon."

The debate was fierce and prolonged, and the "Baconians," having learned all that could be said in favour of their contention, made really a very plausible case, and had decidedly much the better of the argument. However, at the

ACCORDING to a beauty expert, a double chin can be removed by stroking it with a piece of ice.

For those possessing more than two chins it might be necessary to put the face in cold storage for a time.



PRETTY Patricia was bantering Augustus, a genial bachelor, on his reasons for remaining single.

"No-o," he said, "I never was exactly *disappointed* in love. I was what you might call discouraged. You see, when I was very young I became enamoured of a young lady, to whom I was mortally afraid to communicate



NO GRASPER.

RETIRING VILLAGE POLICEMAN (after being presented with a very small cheque): Thanks verra much! Thanks verra much! After knowin' ye a' these years, I won't say it's mair than I expected, but the amount on the cheque is not what counts. I'd have been just as thankfu' if it had been a blank ane.

close of the discussion the three judges who had been selected held a brief consultation, and decided in favour of the negative.

"Why did you decide against us?" subsequently asked one of the disputants. "You know we presented good arguments, while the other fellows didn't show any."

"That's all right," answered the judge to whom this question was addressed, "but two of us had just bought expensive copies of the works of William Shakespeare that cost us fifty shillings. Do you suppose we were going to acknowledge that Shakespeare didn't write 'em?"

my feeling, but at last I screwed up my courage to the proposing point. I said: 'Let's get married.'

"And she replied, 'Great Scot! Who'd have us?'"



"Did you enjoy the amateur dramatic show last night?"

"Well, I thought it was too realistic."

"Really?"

"Yes, it said on the programme, 'One hour is supposed to elapse between the first and second acts,' and it actually did."



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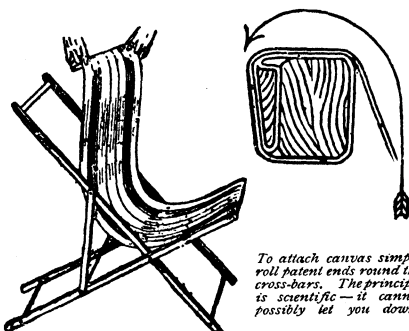


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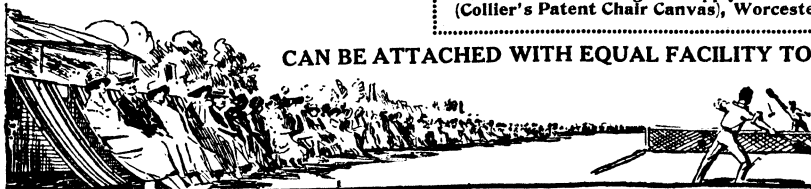
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NATURAL HISTORY UP-TO-DATE.

THE LESSER TRAINCATCHER.

This nimble little creature is to be found in large numbers in the suburbs of cities. It is noted for its rapid, jerky movements and for its habit of suddenly flocking to one spot at certain hours of the day, notably between eight and nine a.m. Some specimens, emerging from their holes a little later than the rest, cover the ground at a quite surprising rate. The Lesser Traincatcher may be recognised by its dapper appearance and by the flat brown leather object and the piece of newspaper which it carries about everywhere. Those who have been enabled to observe it in its home mention its invariable habit of bolting its food, with one eye turned slightly upwards

THE WATER DEAR.

This graceful animal only makes its appearance during the summer months. It frequents seaside resorts and appears on the beach in large herds, lying about on rocks or splashing in the shallow water. Its voice is shrill, and occasionally it utters loud shrieks and cachinnations. It has no fear of man, and will pose gracefully, and as often as desired, for its photograph.

THE WIPER.

So called from its habit of constantly rubbing its proboscis with a white rag. This pest is much in evidence in cities during the winter months, though no season is entirely free from its invasion. There is always at least one specimen to be found in crowded trains or



MORE!

THE SECRETARY: I have been able to raise five thousand pounds, so that the business of the company can be carried on. It has been a difficult matter, and I think I deserve some applause.

THE JUNIOR DIRECTOR: Applause? My dear sir, you deserve an encore!

and sideways, while the females of the species hover restlessly by, uttering plaintive cries that sound like "Time-Late, Time-Late!"

THE MORNING WARBLER.

This bird has a curious trait of only breaking into song in the early hours of the day. It is of cleanly habits and delights in its bath, splashing water vigorously over its body and over all surrounding objects, and carolling full-throatedly at the same time. It is to be noted that the Morning Warbler's song rises to its fullest power and ecstasy when others of the species are fluttering agitatedly outside and giving vent to queer staccato calls, as if of impatience and irritation.

[Facing Third Cover.]

'buses, and the sniffing, sneezing noises to which it is continually giving vent are irritating in the extreme. It has an unpleasant appearance, having a pink nose, watery eyes, and an expression of intense misery. It is universally hated and shunned, but unfortunately the species continues to thrive and increase, no means of exterminating it having as yet been discovered.

B. Noël Saxeby.



"Mummie, I wish that very fat old gentleman would go into the sea to bathe."

"Why, dear?"

"Because I want the tide to come in."



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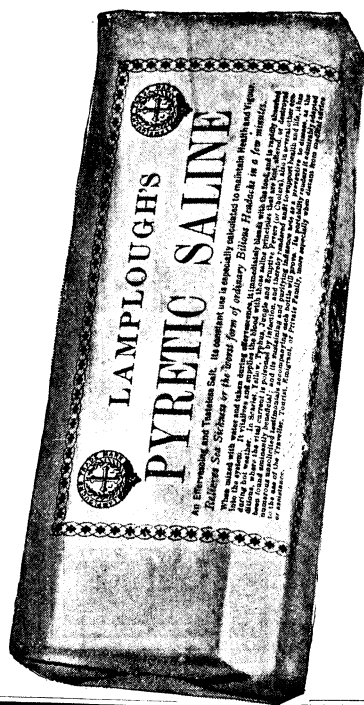
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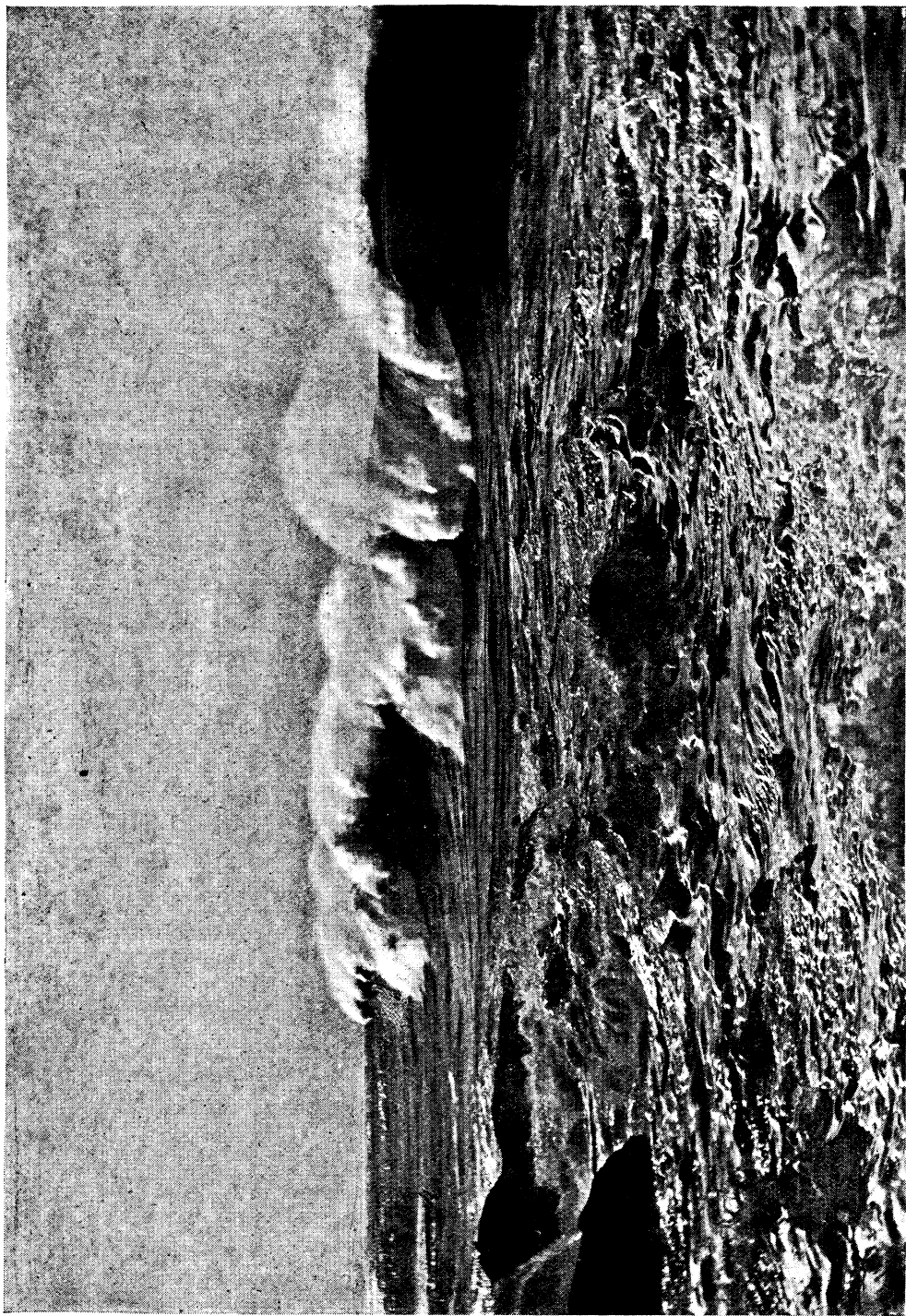
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SEA-FOAM AND SURF. A PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY BY WILLIAM REID.

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"Jean crept to the basement and cleaned her husband's shoes."

# OLD ALE

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "And Five Were Foolish," "Valerie French," "Berry and Co.,"  
"Jonah and Co.," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"**D**'YOU realise, Oliver, that this is our wedding-day?"

Letter in hand, Oliver Pauncefote looked up.

"By Jove, so it is!" he said. "Eighth day of May, two three. Many happy returns, m'dear."

Jean Ludlow Pauncefote did not reply. For a moment she stood staring at her reflection in the tall pier-glass. Then she slid slowly out of her striking cloak, threw this across a chair, lighted a cigarette, and flung herself upon the bed.

"What did you think," she demanded, "that marriage was going to be like?"

Her husband lowered his letter in some surprise.

"My dear," he said, "it is now a quarter

of three, and two bottles of '98 Mumm require sleeping off. If we must search each other's hearts——"

"*In vino veritas*," said Jean. "Go on."

Oliver put down his letter and took off two coats. Then he bestrode a chair, pulled up his shirt-sleeves, and proceeded to fill a pipe.

"Say it again," he said.

"What did you think," said Jean, "that marriage was going to be like?"

Her husband reflected, frowning.

At length——

"I really don't know," he said. "I got a bit rattled once or twice. You know. After bein' congratulated by some strong, earnest mortal with a pre-war hand. Enough to make anyone suspicious. And I asked

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one or two coves who'd done it. All they said was that it all depended on the girl. . . . But I'm very happy, Jean. I've no complaints. If you ask me, I think we've got on very well. We've been married a solid year and we've never had a first-class row."

"That," said Jean, expelling a cloud of smoke, "is because we don't care."

"Oh, rot!" said Oliver stoutly. He felt for a match. "Rot. At least, I can't speak for you, but I certainly care."

"Up to a point—yes. So do I. But we don't mean anything to each other."

"You mean something to me," protested Pauncefote.

"So does your bath before dinner. You're accustomed to me—that's all. If you went out to-night, I should wear black for a year. It's the fashion. But I should be fed to the teeth to think that my green lace dress was going spare. . . . And if I popped off to-morrow, you'd curse the fact that you couldn't go to Ascot. And you'd soon be putting out feelers to find out whether it'd be decent to show up at Goodwood and saying to yourself 'She would have liked me to go.'"

"I—I don't think I should," faltered Pauncefote.

"Why not?" said Jean. "You wouldn't feel any grief. We don't mean anything."

Oliver frowned. Then he took his pipe from his mouth and regarded its bowl.

"Assuming you're right," he said, "—mark you, I don't admit it—but, assuming you're right, why is it?"

Jean shrugged her shining shoulders.

"*C'est la mode*," she said. "It's the age, the time—what you will. Married love's out of fashion—that's all."

"I loved you before," said Pauncefote.

"In a way you did," said Jean, staring upon the cornice. "And I loved you. Then we got married, and it was all over. You ought to count more with me—now." She sat up there, with a laugh, and waved a small hand. "My dear, you count less. 'Less'? You don't count at all—now. We've—we've pulled our fire-cracker. We pulled it a year ago." She threw herself back on the pillows, inhaled deeply and let the smoke steal out of her beautiful mouth. "Don't think I'm getting at you. I'm not at all. I'm just making faces at Fate."

"Why?"

"Because I'm disappointed. When one was married I thought one got down to things. I thought one found the emotions

that poets write about—love, hope, joy, grief, hate. They're the foundation of life. I brushed against them all when I was engaged. I imagine you did, too—in a sort of way."

Pauncefote shifted upon his chair.

"We're much better out of it," he said. "Give me a quiet life. Emotion's all very well, but it's sticky stuff."

"It isn't fashionable," said Jean.

"For a very good reason," said her husband. "It isn't convenient. We're just beginning to appreciate the wisdom of eliminating mental inconvenience. Look at Dickens, Thackeray and the rest. Yarn after yarn founded on human emotion. Sighs and yells and tears because someone's got stuck. That's what you get for playing with fire. Now it's dawning on people that use their brains that if you let sleeping dogs lie you won't be chewed. An' so we go quietly along—*without looking for trouble*. Hang it all, Jean, I think we've done very well. We don't get in each other's way. We——"

"We should," said Jean. "We ought to. That's my point. Marriage means getting in each other's way. If you don't, you might as well not be married. One's style ought to be cramped. Not necessarily unpleasantly cramped, but cramped. If you were just going to drive and a priceless girl came up and asked you the time—well, she'd've got in your way, but that wouldn't worry you. In fact, if you could square your partner, you'd sling your driver away and take her into the pine-woods to look for clocks."

"I shouldn't at all," said Pauncefote uneasily. "I should direct her to——"

"No doubt—if you were playing with me," said Jean drily. "Appearances have to be kept up. Never mind. The point is that one's style can be agreeably cramped. Marriage can cramp it pleasantly or unpleasantly, but it ought to cramp it. Look at us. We aren't affected at all. We don't care. If we did, we shouldn't dare show it. It—it isn't done. . . . Life's like ale—good, strong ale. History will show you that. But we don't get further than the froth. That's all right when you're a child, but if you're not going to get down to the liquor when you're married, when are you?"

"My dear," said her husband, "why worry? I've drunk some rotten bad beer."

"Haven't you drunk any good?"

Oliver sighed.



"Of course," he said, "if you're not happy, Jean—"

"I'm not. Neither are you. We don't know what it means."

"I'm comfortable," said Pauncefote. "And that's something."

"Listen. When you die, the tankard of Life is taken away from you. Well, supposing then you found out that the ale you'd always given a miss was the most glorious liquor you'd ever dreamed of . . . Wouldn't you want to kick yourself?"

"Weather permitting," said Pauncefote, "*ça va sans dire*."

"And, good or bad, don't you fancy you'd feel a bit cheap beside people who'd drunk their whack?"

Oliver pulled his moustache.

"Sort of 'What did you do in the Great War, Daddy?' idea?"

"Exactly," said Jean. "Well, don't you think wedlock's the time? It seems the obvious moment for our little crowd. 'Marry and settle down.' That's a time-honoured phrase. 'Settle down.' What to?"

"Drinkin' the ale, I suppose."

"I imagine so," said Jean. "Look at the words of the Service—'love and cherish.' I take it they mean something."

"They did when they were written," said Oliver. "But times have changed, Jean. I'm ready to love an' cherish, but—but the occasion doesn't arise."

"What you mean is, it isn't done. . . . I kiss you, of course, but then I kiss other men. And you kiss other girls. It's the fashion. We don't love each other at all; we love ourselves. We don't cherish each other; we each take blinking good care to look after ourselves. It's the fashion. . . . It's the fashion to live together, and so we do. Bar that, we mightn't be married." She set her cigarette in a tray, laced her pointed fingers and set them behind her head. "Why am I wearing this frock? Because Pat Lafone said that he loved me in black."

Oliver raised his eyebrows.

"Did he really?" he said.

"Why shouldn't he?" said his wife. "There's nothing wrong in that. What is wrong is that I put it on to please him. You needn't worry. That's as far as it's gone. Besides, he wasn't there, so I've been stung. The point is we mightn't be married. In theory, I should care for you and nobody else. And you for me—exclusively. In practice, if you discount habit—I'm

accustomed to you, you know—you come third on the list. I care first for myself, then other attractive men, finally my husband."

Oliver rose to his feet and laid down his pipe.

"That's pretty straight, any way," he said.

"You know it's the same with you. The tragedy is we don't care. . . . If you cleared out and left me, that might bring me up short. I think it probably would. I should come down to Things then—with the hell of a jar. The ale'd be bitter then."

"Jean, why dig up this ground? It's not particularly sweet. You say you don't care about me. Well, let it go. I'm sorry you don't, but——"

"Why will you blink the facts? Why can't you be frank, as I am? I won't tell anyone."

"I don't care who you tell, but——"

"Of course you do," said Jean, uncrossing and recrossing her legs. "More. You care so much that you won't give yourself away—even to me. Sentiment's bad form. Besides, you're self-conscious—awkward. This discussion's inconvenient. You'd be thankful if I'd drop it. . . . Why don't you take the plunge? It won't involve you. Drop the mask for ten minutes and face the rotten facts. . . . If you were a waster by nature, I should have saved my breath."

There was a long silence.

At length—

"What," said Oliver, "do you suggest?"

"Do you admit the evil?"

"Yes."

"Ah!"

"But it's in the age," said Pauncefote. "We're over-civilised. Money and civilisation have emasculated Things. Our crowd's never up against it. We don't comfort each other because we don't need comforting; and gradually we're losing the art. If you don't use your arm, it'll wither away. There's no 'stern stuff' in our lives, and how can you lug it in? For years we've all been fightin' to wash it out—to make Life into a song-an'-dance show; and now we've done it. Well, an odd weddin'-chime isn't going to turn it back into Eden." He thrust the chair out of his way and began to pace the floor. Jean, smiling lazily, watched him with half-closed eyes. "Once the man hunted—for food; and the woman kept the cave—against his coming. And when he came, she fed him—bathed his wounds—took his head in her lap. And he was her



man. . . . And she was his woman. . . . They didn't want any Service to tell them that. But now the wheel's swung round to the other extreme. Hardship and peril are out, and luxury's in. Nature's been swamped by Art. Emotion's a branch of Nature, and it's

"Because," he said sharply, "because you must have a thrill. The man and the woman were thankful to be alive. Between the wolves and the weather their lives were exciting enough. But ours—ours run on greased wheels. We have to devise our excitement. And the easiest, most satisfying way is to rob an orchard." He stopped still there and flung up his head. "And there's the honest value of marriage to-day. When you marry you merely add a tree to the common or garden orchard of forbidden fruit."

Propped on a white elbow, his wife regarded him.



"'Eighth day of May, two three.  
Many happy returns, m'dear'"

withered away. . . . If ever the man was late, the woman wept for joy to see him alive. You don't do that because you assume I've stopped somewhere to have a drink."

"Why did I dress to-night to please Pat Lafone?"

Oliver hesitated. Then—

"Good for you," she said. "You've put it uncommonly well. You see—right down at bottom you feel as I do. I had an



idea you did, and I'm rather glad. We may be a couple of wasters, but at least in the security of our own bedroom we've the daring to admit the fact."

Oliver opened a window and stood for a moment staring upon the silent dignity of the *Place Vendôme*.

"That's not much to be glad of," he said slowly. "What



"For a moment she stood staring at her reflection in the tall pier-glass."

d'you suggest we should do?"

"Nothing," said Jean. "My dear, I'm purely destructive. I can see the rot and I've made you confess you can see it: but I can't stop it. . . . If you cared, perhaps I should care. If I cared, perhaps you would. But I can't swing my propeller,

and you can't swing yours. That's Fate's job. The age has produced our crowd—a crowd of wasters, run by a sort of Baal that they've set up. The worship of Baal consists in sailing close



to the wind. The closer you sail, the better worshipper you are—other things being equal, of course. I mean, you must do it neatly. . . . And as someone's constantly sailing a point closer than anyone's ever sailed before, the standard of worship is rising. It's higher this year, for instance, than it was last. If you want a good example, look at the way we dress. Frankly, can you beat it? . . . Well, why do we do it? Why don't we turn it down? I'll tell you. Because the penalty for non-worship is rather worse than death. It's not ostracism: it's not even social extinction. *You just become a mug.* And that's a fate no waster can ever face."

"We could break away," said Oliver gloomily. "Clear right out, I mean."

"And be bored to death in a week. My dear, we've tasted blood. That's one of the rites. . . . No. Don't you worry, me lad. We're tied tight enough. So long as we've money to burn—"

Oliver gave a short laugh.

"Six weeks ago," he said, "we were worth sixty thousand pounds. I shoved the lot into francs at a hundred and ten. To-morrow my cheque'll be cleared at sixty-six. . . . There's another forty thousand quid for the coffers of Baal."

"That's right," said Jean. "If you'd lost it instead, we might have had a chance. Necessity knows no law—not even that of Baal. As it is . . ." She swung her legs off the bed and slid to her feet. "As it is, we're doomed. I'm doomed to disappointment, and you—what are you doomed to?"

Oliver closed the window before replying.

"I may be wrong," he said, "but I think you put it too high. It's perfectly true—we lead a poisonous life. But there's no reason why, if you care—"

"I don't. I've told you so. I've nothing to make me."

Pauncefote swallowed.

"At least," he said, "we've got the same point of view."

"What you mean is we both see the rot," said Jean, preparing to fight her way out of her dress. "But I regret it. You only deplore it, you know. You said you were comfortable."

"I said I cared," said her husband. "And—and so I do."

"Perhaps you're right," said Jean, slipping into a dressing-gown. "The trouble is that I don't. You're quite all right, you know. I've no complaints—either."

She took her seat at the table and began to loosen her hair.

"I beg your pardon," said Pauncefote. "I—I'm very fortunate."

"Don't!" cried Jean sharply. "Don't!" The man started at her tone, and their eyes met in the glass. "Don't!" she repeated fiercely. "I can't bear it. Once—yes. A year ago. . . . But now it's too late. Besides, I made you say it. I dragged the words out of your mouth: and so they're worthless. Worse. They're a travesty—that's how they talked in Eden. But we're in a song-and-dance show—don't forget that. We're under contract to Baal. Of course you can 'pot' Eden, but I—I couldn't play Eve. I know I don't care, but I'm just—just soppy enough not—not to want to pretend." Her voice broke there, but she plugged the hole with a laugh. "And there's some real sob-stuff for you. Never mind. You won't hear it again. It's the swan-song of my mughood—the last flare-up of the lamp of a foolish virgin, who thought—thought . . ."

She clapped her hands to her face and burst into tears.

Oliver flashed to her side, fell upon one knee and slid an arm round her waist.

She shook him off—savagely.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jean Pauncefote might have been a great lady.

Had she lived seven centuries ago, she would certainly have been fought for, probably have been chosen Queen of Beauty and Love at several tournaments and possibly have made history as, in the absence of her lord, a *chatelaine sans peur et sans reproche*.

But Fate was against her.

In October 1918 she was still at school. Three months later she had left Philadelphia for ever and was dining and dancing at London night-clubs five nights of the week. Such a *début* at such a moment into such a world would have demoralised nine girls out of ten. The fair American was not demoralised: but she would not have been human if she had even attempted to swim against the stream.

After all, if we may believe Sir Toby Belch, Feste, the Clown, had 'a contagious breath.'

*What is love? 'tis not hereafter;*

*Present mirth hath present laughter;*

*What's to come is still unsure. . . .*

She had no money: yet might, I think, have married anyone. But rank and riches



to Jean meant nothing at all. She married Oliver Pauncefote because she liked the man, found him a gentleman, firmly believed that he would not let her down.

Herein she was right.

Pauncefote had been through the War and was out to forget. With eighty-thousand pounds behind him, he began to forget very well. Feste's doctrine suited him down to the ground.

*In delay there lies no plenty ;*

*Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,*

*Youth's a stuff will not endure.*

But he never forgot that he was a gentleman.

The two were lovely and pleasant in their lives.

Tall, straight, limber, Jean's form was superb. Her beautiful features, her fearless grey eyes, her magnificent golden hair and her exquisite skin were straight from Malory. Her mouth was proud. Her charm of manner was notable. Jean had a quick brain and a gay heart. She made a wonderful waster, adorning even that sumptuous, flashing world in which she moved. That it was not her setting is rather painfully clear. If a fountain must run with wine, there are just as good-looking liquors as old Falernian.

Oliver Pauncefote looked what in fact he was—a soldier taking his ease. Tall, fair, fresh-faced, his was a lazy air. The man might well have been handsome; but Achilles with his feet up would not have made an Iliad. The strength was there in his face, but it was always off duty. An easy smile sat on his fine mouth; his clear eyes were half-veiled; he spoke with a drawl. His manners were delightful. At his worst, he was easy-going; at his best, debonair. And that was a pity. A head that can carry a casque should not wear nothing but a bycocket.

Captain and Mrs. Pauncefote lived soft.

Finding their income insufficient, they spent their capital freely, proposing by happy speculation to replenish their hoard. The deal which Oliver was just completing was, of course, a coup phenomenal. To do him justice, it would not have been so phenomenal if it had not been so daring. Fortunes are not made at chuck-farthing. They are won by pitching fortunes upon the table.

So also are they lost.

When, seated at breakfast in their *salon* some seven hours after Jean had burst into tears, Oliver read in the paper that *Plaisir*

*et Cie.*, Bankers, had suspended payment, he put a hand to his head. . . .

For a full minute he sat, staring. . . .

Then the door was opened, and Jean came into the room.

Oliver laid down the paper and buttered some bread.

"Well, old lady," he said, "what's the programme to-day?"

"Lunch with the Bostocks," said Jean, selecting a roll. "Then to Molyneux with Maisie. Dinner with Pat Lafone. It's his birthday, he says, and he swears we'll light such a candle—"

"Let's call it off," said Pauncefote, "an' keep the day to ourselves."

Jean lifted her beautiful head.

"For Heaven's sake—why?"

"Oh, I don't know," said her husband.

"Only—only it's our weddin'-day"—Jean frowned—"and I think perhaps we might mark it. You know. Just draw in our horns."

"In loving memory'?"

"If you like," said Pauncefote. "Let's—let's go for a walk in the *Bois*."

Jean gave a little shriek of laughter.

"My dear Oliver," she said, "your efforts to play the mug are too good to be true. Now eat your bread and butter like a good little boy and tell me what won the Church Congress—I mean, the Two Thousand. Where was Tom Pinch?"

"Don't know," said her husband shortly.

"But I mean what I say. I want to talk things over."

"Well, I don't," said Jean. "I had my bust last night—my final bust. The incident's closed. Besides, in the cold light of day—"

"I'm afraid it isn't," said Pauncefote.

His wife's eyes flashed.

"Oliver," she said, "we've never yet had a row—a proper row. But if you're going to rake up the muck we picked over last night, we shall break our record with a bang. Now listen to me. Women are not like men. They may be as tough as teak, but once in a while they crumple—for half an hour. Something inside gives way. It's humiliating, but there you are. . . . Well, I crumpled up last night. And you—you saw me. You witnessed my humiliation. Are you going to take advantage of what you saw?"

"No," said Oliver, "I'm not. I'm not that sort of man. But I've things to say to you, Jean, that—that don't concern the Bostocks or—or Pat Lafone."



Jean raised her eyebrows.

"It's only ten now," she said, "and what's the matter with this room?"

Oliver rose to his feet and pushed back his chair.

"Perhaps you're right," he said slowly.

The man's brain was pounding. Jean's sentences seemed to reach it by a circuitous route. On arrival they had to be parsed. . .

Mechanically he took out his case and lighted a cigarette. Then he continued slowly.

"You know what you said last night . . . about being tied tight . . . so long as we'd money——"

"One moment," said Jean coldly, "I don't seem to have made myself plain. I endeavoured to point out just now that reference to what passed last night would be bad form. And I hinted that I should resent it—most bitterly."

Oliver passed a hand across his forehead.

"I know," he said. "I'm not referring——"

"You quoted what you said were my words."

"I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking. . . ."

"Well, please pull yourself together, because I mean what I say. This is a question of honour—between the sexes. I broached certain matters last night which we never should have discussed in a thousand years. You know that as well as I do. I never should have broached them if I hadn't gone to bits. You'd never have heard me broach them if I hadn't been your wife."

"I know, I know," said Pauncefote wearily. "Don't say it again." He drew in his breath as one about to make an effort. "Jean."

"Well?"

"Supposing . . . all of a sudden . . . we—we became poor . . . You know. Lost all we'd got. . . . Supposing——"

He stopped there.

His wife was standing before him, with blazing eyes.

"I shan't strike you," she said, "because that'd be coming down to your level. Besides, you'd probably strike me back. But the impulse is there. . . . I knew you were selfish, of course. And a waster. And other things. But I never knew you were trash. . . . Only trash would discuss the whimper of a maudlin girl."

Pauncefote regarded her steadily.

The lash had recovered his nerve.

"No doubt," he said drily, "no doubt.

Let's leave it there, shall we?" The light of attack in Jean's eyes slid into a stare. "What I was trying to do was to temper the wind. . . . We're broke, my good lady. Bust. We haven't a bean. Our hundred thousand's gone." Jean started back, and a hand went up to her mouth. "Plaisir and Co. have failed."

"Oliver!"

"It's been done before," said her husband carelessly. He stepped to one side and past her and flung himself into a chair. "But the point I wish to make is that this is where we get off. I've about twelve hundred in England, but that won't pay our debts. We shall get a bit on your pearls and the Rolls and other things, but you're always stung to glory when you've got to realise quick." He paused to inhale comfortably. "Can you get packed in time for the two o'clock train? It's no good staying here."

Jean pulled herself together.

"But, Oliver, what shall we do?"

"I've no idea. I must try to get work, of course. If you had money, or I had any to give you, we could each go our own way. As it is, I'm afraid your only immediate hope is to stick to me. What work I can get I don't know. A soldier's not much good outside his own job. . . . By the way, I'm extremely sorry I've let you down. I should never have put the lot into one concern. I'm afraid you'll find it pretty thick."

"What about you?"

Pauncefote shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't imagine I shall like it, but that's neither here nor there. The first thing we've got to do is to fade away. Again, we must be in London. We must be on the spot. We must pay up what we owe, but if I can stop any orders—well, we might be glad of the dust. I ordered three suits at Brandon's before we came away. I told him he needn't hurry, so there's just a chance they're not cut. An' Whippy's makin' a saddle, an' Hardy a rod, an'—an' . . . ."

He caught his breath sharply and let the sentence go, sitting still in his chair with fixed, unseeing eyes.

The stabbing thought that never again would he hear the whimper of hounds in the soft, sweet-smelling burthen of a November day ripped and tore at Oliver Pauncefote's heart. Memories came with a rush to rub salt in the wound—a tremendous day with the Cottesmore—a check at Carter Spinney,



when the birches had looked like fountains and Sir Barnaby Shrew had come up and asked him to Stomacher Place—Mandarin's joyous fly-jumps and the swift tremor of his ears—a burst up Sweeting Valley, when hounds were running mute and Fantasy jumped the Chaffer as though it were a garden-path. . . .

"Oliver! Oliver!"

Jean was beside him on her knees, with an arm round his neck.

Pauncefote put her aside and rose to his feet.

"Don't let's pretend," he said quietly. "It's hardly worth it. Besides, to tell you the truth, reach-me-down sympathy never cut very much ice with me. Finally, you'll need all you've got for yourself before we're through. I've let you down badly, I know. But God knows I've got my punishment. . . . And I'll do my very best to break your fall." Jean sat back on her heels and stared at the floor. "When you feel most sore—murderous, please try to remember the intolerable position I'm in. If we meant anything to each other, it would have been less odious. As it is—well, obviously, I'd rather have died by torture than let you down."

He passed to the door of the *salon*. With his fingers about the handle, he stopped and spoke over his shoulder.

"Can you manage the two o'clock train?"

Jean never moved.

"I'll—I'll be ready," she said.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Three ghastly months had gone by, and Captain and Mrs. Pauncefote were down to seven pounds.

Their liabilities had proved higher than they had feared: their personal effects had fetched even less than they had expected. Cars, jewels, clothing—everything had been sold to pay their debts. The two were determined to keep their memory clean. The mighty had fallen, but at least their stalls should be left swept and garnished. What they owed they paid to the uttermost farthing. By the time the last cheque had been signed, Destitution had crept very close.

*Plaisir et Cie.* had paid nothing. Whether they would ever pay anything seemed doubtful indeed. That they would never pay anything to Pauncefote was painfully clear. The man was powerless. He was out of touch. To employ a Parisian lawyer was beyond his means. Remembering a

recent threat to transfer his deposit account, his English Bank wagged familiar forefingers and 'advised' him to lodge his claim and 'wait and see.' Pauncefote did so, as well as he could, and received no reply.

The two lived in rooms in a mean street and boarded themselves. Pauncefote went from pillar to post, seeking work ceaselessly and finding none. Jean raked the newspapers, cursed her own uselessness and watched the grey creep into her husband's hair. She also found that food was far cheaper at stalls than it was in shops. . . . Neither complained of their lot. They walked a good deal together, avoiding familiar neighbourhoods, breaking new and unlovely ground. They never referred to the old days. Their relations were desperately strained, but the strain was always masked. They laughed little, hid their misery somehow, respected each other's reserve as a sacred thing. Under it all, their hearts yearned upon each other. . . .

With infinite precaution against detection, each sought by hook or by crook to smooth the other's path. So often as he was abroad, Oliver went without food—and swore he had lunched at Lyons' and done himself well. Jean crept to the basement and cleaned her husband's shoes—and let him commend the slut that stole their food. Awakened one night by pain in a game knee, the man lay still till daylight for fear of disturbing her rest. Jean bargained for hot shaving-water—and got it, too. It cost her one set of exquisite underclothes every month. They came to cherish each other as they had never cherished themselves. . . .

And now—three months had gone by, and Captain and Mrs. Pauncefote were down to seven pounds.

There was no work in London.

Wondering whether there was a God in Heaven, the Pauncefotes went to the registry office from which six months ago their servants had come.

They asked for the head of the firm and, when they were ushered in, recalled who they were and offered themselves as caretakers—with tightened lips. . . .

As luck would have it, the man was gentle. He knew them at once, and the grievous Saturnalia hit him between the eyes. He saw no reason to exult. He perceived a clear occasion for delicate courtesy—for serving two patrons in distress far more diligently than he had served them in prosperity. He spared them spoken sympathy. It was not his place.



"We ought to have come in by the Servants' Entrance," said Jean gaily. "But we thought, as we knew you——"

"There is only one entrance for you, madam, so long as this office is here."

He sent for the registers, scanned them, turned up his nose.

Then he took their address and begged them to be of good cheer.

"I shall do all I can at once, madam. In two or three days, perhaps. . . ."

"What—what about references?" said Pauncefote. "I suppose——"

"I'll get over that, sir."

They rose to their feet.

Jean stammered something about a booking-fee.

The man inclined his head.

"There is nothing to pay, madam."

He came with them to the door and bowed them out.

The two passed down the blazing pavement, unable to speak. . . .

Two days later a messenger brought them a letter and waited for a reply.

*For two months certain . . . a country house in Wiltshire . . . one mile from the village . . . servants' hall and bathroom . . . wages—three guineas a week, fuel and light . . . sole charge. . . .*

The note concluded—

*As is usual in such cases, I beg to enclose five pounds to defray expenses, to be repaid from salary at your convenience.*

The Pauncefotes left for Wiltshire the following day.

\* \* \* \* \*

Supine on the turf beneath a chestnut, Oliver laid down his pipe and praised God. By his side, Jean, looking years younger, sat clasping her knees and regarding a peerless avenue of aged elms. Behind them, Hallatrow Hall, grey and long and low, basked in the evening sunshine like an old hound.

It was the quiet hour.

The Pauncefotes' work was over for the day.

The house had been thoroughly aired, two rooms had been cleaned, their quarters had been put in order, a report had been written, letters had been re-addressed. The latter lay in a pile upon the turf, awaiting the postman.

"Jean," said Oliver suddenly, "we've much to be thankful for."

"Yes," said his wife, "we have."

"We had much more once," said

Pauncefote. "But it never occurred to us then."

Jean shook her beautiful head.

"We never had more," she said, "to be thankful for. We never had half so much. Still, we might have been grateful."

"We had more, really," said Oliver, "but we didn't appreciate it. Now that we've been through the mill——"

"I never had more," said Jean.

There was a silence.

At length—

"What do you mean?" said Oliver.

"I mean I've got down to the ale."

There was another silence.

"I'm afraid it's been rather bitter, dear," said Oliver.

"Ale is bitter sometimes, but it warms the blood. I think I count with you now. Why, I don't know, but you talked in your sleep once. . . ."

"What did I say?"

"It was the night of my birthday—six weeks ago. You seemed worried to death. 'I want her to have some flowers,' you kept on saying. 'I want her to have some flowers—my . . . darling . . . wife.' And then you said, 'It's too late now'—over and over again. And then you laughed terribly and said 'A present from Eden.'"

Oliver sat upright and put out his hand.

"That's why you never had them," he said. "I was afraid . . . they'd seem a travesty . . . because they were—too late."

Jean put her hand in his.

"You called me 'your darling wife.' You. After what I'd said and done. Remembered my rotten birthday—wanted to give me blossoms when you couldn't afford to smoke."

"Do I count with you, Jean—now?"

"You always counted, Oliver; but, because it wasn't the fashion, I covered it up. I broke out that night to see if I counted with you. And when I found I didn't, I made up my mind to kill my love for you."

"You did count, dear," said Oliver. "Down at the bottom of things. But I think I'd rather have died than let it appear. It seems very silly now, but—I was ashamed. When I was alone in the room, I used to kiss your gloves; but when you came in—well, I didn't so often kiss you. Even that night at the *Rhin*, with all the openings you gave me——"

"You saw them?"

"Yes. But I couldn't step in. It was Balaam's ass over again, with Sentiment full in the way with a drawn sword. I think—"



I believe I could have done it if we'd been in the dark. As it was, I was on the edge. . . . And then you landed me one—a regular stinger. . . . You said you kissed other men, and you mentioned—Pat Lafone.”

Jean nodded.

“I did it to get a rise,” she said quietly “It—it wasn’t true.”

Oliver’s grasp tightened.

“When we were engaged,” he said, “I heard two women talking—talking of you and me. I cleared out as soon as I’d tumbled, but I’d heard a thing first that stuck. They said there was only one man on earth who could take you away from me . . . and they mentioned . . . his name.”

Jean gave a tremulous laugh.

“Heavens above!” she said. “Why, I wouldn’t be seen dead with him.”

“I didn’t know that, Jean. It—it looked the other way. And—and I sort of came unbuttoned at the thought of losing you. I let out, if you remember, about ‘forbidden fruit.’”

“Yes,” said Jean slowly. “I remember. I never got it, of course. I couldn’t see anything except the blinding fact that you didn’t care. And . . . all the time . . . you did.”

Oliver got to his knees and put her hand to his lips.

“I worship you, Jean,” he said. “I always have. I worship your glorious body and I worship your darling ways. I love your laughter and your precious, blessed voice. I love your footfalls and the breath of your parted lips. But that was always . . . Now I’ve got something more, something to kneel to. . . . You’re made of the stuff that queens are made of, Jean. I let you down—most terribly. I know I never meant to, but that’s no defence. You left the finance to me, and I broke up your life. . . . Well, women don’t like their lives being broken up, even by accident. But never once, by word or deed or look, have you so much as hinted that I might have taken more care. . . . More. You’ve never complained, you’ve never murmured once—and it’s been far harder for you. Instead, you’ve stood beside me, quiet, steadfast. If you’ve wept, I’ve never seen it. If you’d liked to make it *your* trouble, you’d every right. But you wouldn’t do that. You wouldn’t even let it be *our* trouble. It *hasn’t* been ‘trouble’ at all. You’ve charmed it into just an incident . . . an incident in *our* life. . . .”

Jean stood up and took his face in her hands.

“It’s the ale, my darling,” she said. “The ale I spoke of. So long as we drink it together. . . .”

Oliver rose to his feet and took her in his arms.

“‘And he was her man,’” whispered Jean.

“‘And she was his woman.’”

They looked up to see the postman ten paces away.

“There now,” he said. “I thought this was ‘Allatrow ‘All. An’ lo! and be’old, if it ain’t the Garden of Eden.”

“Don’t say you’re the serpent,” said Oliver, laughing.

“Oh, shame!” said the postman, producing a letter. “Never min’. ‘Ere’s a napple.”

They laughed with him, gave him their letters in exchange and watched him tramp down the avenue under the rook-ridden elms.

“Hullo, it’s for me,” said Oliver. “Oh, I know. It’s from the *Rhin*.”

“The *Rhin*?” said Jean, peering. “How have they got our address?”

“‘Member those wires we never paid for? And I was always going to send the porter a cheque? Well, when we got here I remembered, and, as we weren’t so tied up, I sent him five bob.”

He ripped the envelope open, to find another inside.

This had been sent from London some time in May.

“Ancient history,” said Pauncefote, and broke the seal.

COLD’S BANK LIMITED.

PALL MALL BRANCH.

London, S.W.

Capt. O. Pauncefote,

Hotel du Rhin,

Place Vendôme,

Paris.

Private and Confidential.

Sir,

*A week ago you sent us a cheque on Plaisir et Cie. for 6,600,000 francs, with instructions to clear at 66 or better and place upon deposit to your account.*

*Two days ago the rumour that Plaisir et Cie. were in difficulties reached me from a very secret but highly reliable source.*

*I at once endeavoured to communicate with you, but found that you were in Paris.*

*It was manifest that, if action was to be taken at all, it must be taken instantly, and,*



believing that, if I could have advised you, you would have told me to clear at any cost, I sold your cheque within the hour for ninety-two thousand pounds.

Particularly in view of the fact that this is your first transaction with us, I need hardly say that I am greatly relieved to see from the evening papers that our disregard of your instructions was apparently justified.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. S. Nield.

Manager.

May 7th, 1924.

For a long time neither spoke.

Presently Jean touched Oliver on the arm and pointed to the old grey house.

"It's for sale, isn't it?" she faltered.

Oliver nodded. He dared not trust his voice.

"Shall we—— Would you like to live here?"

Oliver's arms were about her, and his cheek against hers.

"Jean, my darling, my darling."

"I mean," said Jean, with a little half-laugh, half-sob, "it seems—a pity—to leave—the Garden of Eden."

*Another complete story by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number.*



## A READER IN A GARDEN.

**O**VER the printed page with forehead bent,  
With half-shut eyes and eager listening brain,  
He pondered thoughts that unattended went  
In and then out again.

Till from the silent book he looked away  
And sensed how in the honey-laden air  
Fine atoms of the summer warmed the day  
And made the moment rare.

Then from the pansied grass and from the place  
Where lowly lilies lingered to be sought  
Stole a slow Something of exceeding grace  
And wedded with his thought.

And like some hasty bee who, entering,  
Is blinded by the sweetness of a flower,  
Stunned by the matchless beauty of the Thing,  
That reader sat an hour.

Thus it may be the writer, long since dust,  
Sat hearkening, and sudden dipped his pen  
And wrote down burning words that always must  
Inspire his fellow-men.

FAY INCHFAWN,

*Author of "Songs of the Ups and Downs," "Through the Windows of a Little House," etc*



# METHOD IN LAWN TENNIS

By KATHLEEN MCKANE

LADY CHAMPION

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF AN ALL-ROUND GAME : GROUND STROKES : THE BACKHAND BOGEY : GRIP WITH THE HAND AND GRIP WITH THE MIND : FOOTWORK : THE USE OF THE EYE : CUT STROKES : HOW TO MEET THE BALL

*Illustrated from new photographs by Cecil B. Waterlow, for which Miss McKane has posed specially for this article.*

LAWN tennis has been praised by innumerable writers, and I do not hesitate to join in the chorus, feeling that the best and truest things that have been said are not too good for the subject. But the question that has most exercised lawn tennis scribes of late, namely, the decline of England from first place, has not, it seems to me, been answered satisfactorily.

The outworn traditions that still cling to lawn tennis, and our innate British conservatism, have already been noticed in my first article, but obviously they do not cover the whole of the ground. They only touch the fringe of the question. I believe, however, that readers will find it more helpful if I set down my ideas about method in lawn tennis, not forgetting the spirit—the mental and moral aspects of the game—than if I attempt to expound theories about the decline of England from the highest position in its records. To go on repeating “Why? Why?” to evolve more or less ingenious answers, more or less satisfactory to national and personal pride, does not really get us much further. It is not the direct road to definite results. That road I believe to be the rather rough one of constant application and hard work for those who are to come to the top. But everyone who aspires to success at lawn tennis must get results in his or her own way, because personality is of enormous importance in the game. Even the capacity

for imitating great players is part of the individuality of the beginner who is climbing up the ladder.

## IS THERE ANY ORTHODOX STYLE OF PLAY?

I feel that it would be waste of time for me to address the great multitude of keen young players if I were to lay down the law. Youth, hopeful and confident, rebels against dogmatism in games, as in other matters. I believe that in the splendid sport of lawn tennis, far more than in other games, there can never be absolute right and wrong as regards methods of play and stroke production. There are first-class players to-day whose style is said to be unorthodox; but I would go further than that, and say that there is not, and cannot be, an absolute standard of orthodoxy. Miss Ryan, for example, employs a chop stroke probably more than any other well-known player. René Lacoste, the young French champion, uses a sliced forehand drive that is peculiarly his own. Shimidzu, the famous Japanese champion, and Mrs. Shepherd Barron are also outstanding examples of first-class players whose methods might be considered unorthodox. I doubt if any professional lawn tennis teacher would recommend these methods to his average pupil. But teachers are too apt to impose their ideas of orthodox style upon their pupils, and to neglect the development of any special individual aptitudes that they may possess. I can



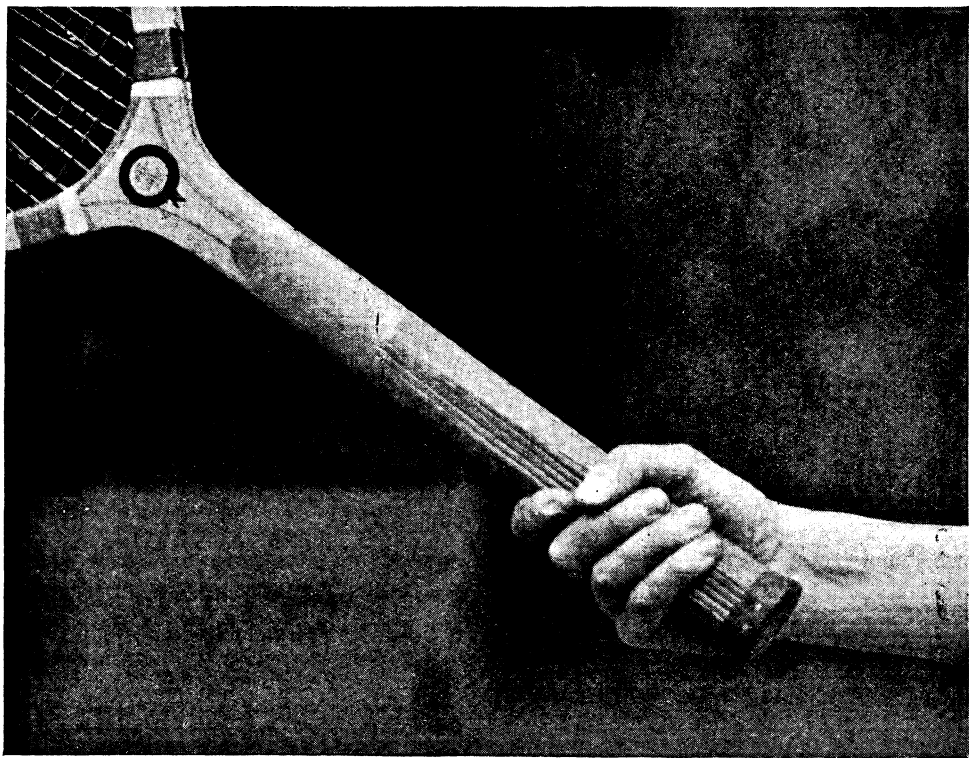
only describe the methods that seem to me to be best, or, rather, that are best for me, and warn my readers that these do not necessarily apply to every case. Having guarded myself in this way, I can proceed with a clear conscience.

### THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO SUCCESS IS ROUGH.

First of all, for success, one's heart and mind and all the rest of one, whatever that may be, must be on the game and nowhere else. Just think for a moment what this

you may ask, without realising that your question suggests a compromise, suggests that it might be right to do the thing by halves. Needless to repeat the text "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do—" The things that one's hands find to do are either worth doing or best left undone. That is all that one really has to decide about, and I shall go on assuming that we have decided that lawn tennis *is* worth while.

Concentration, then, is of primary importance, and this idea leads us straight to the notion that it might be possible to develop



MY FOREHAND GRIP.

*For the forehand drive I grip with the flat part of the racket handle against that part of the palm of the hand which forms the base of the thumb, about where, according to the palmists, the line of life comes. For my backhand grip, see photograph on the opposite page.*

means. Think of yourself on a tennis court, as you doubtless have been many times, but imagine that everything, except the court, the net, the balls, the rackets, and your opponent, is swept out of existence, then you will have an idea of what your mental attitude towards the game should be, if you are to make the most of your powers and have the best chance of winning.

But is it worth while? Is it good enough?

a genius for the game by taking infinite pains. But that I do not believe. With all due deference to Carlyle's definition, another kind of genius is also required in the make-up of a first-class lawn tennis player, the kind of genius that a sea-gull has for flying, about which it presumably takes no pains whatever.

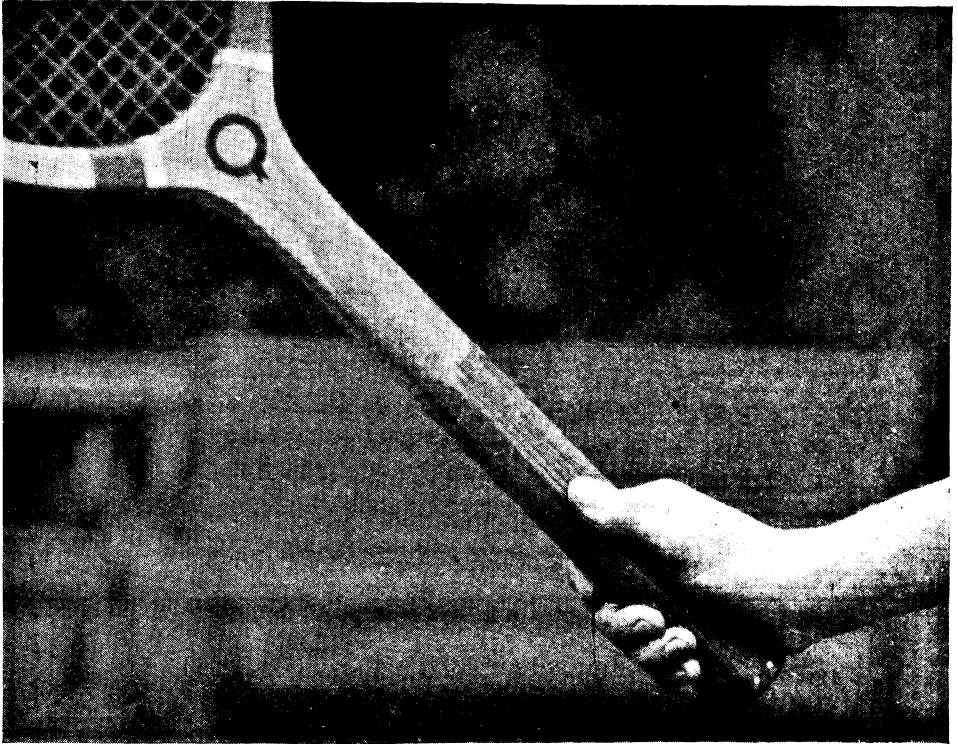
Mlle. Lenglen is undoubtedly a genius at the game. She has taken a vast amount of pains over it, and anyone who has watched



her must admit that she has the other kind of genius also—the natural genius that makes her play so beautiful to look at. She has all the strokes. Her play is almost perfect as an “all-round” game. Her methods in every department of the game, as regards stroke production, can always be used as illustrations of how to do it. I could name easily half a dozen young English lady players who have admirable forehand drives, and in some cases good backhand ground strokes, but who can never hope to rise to the top because they have left the rest of

back of the court and the strokes she knows she can do. She probably finds a good, active partner in the mixed matches, to whom her accurate base-line game is a sound support; thus she gets no incentive to learn to volley.

It requires real strength of mind to learn to volley and to bring one's game to the required point of all-round efficiency. A young player may be required for a time to sacrifice some of her powers of winning, submitting to apparently unnecessary defeat; and that is just where too much



MY BACKHAND GRIP.

*The change for a backhand stroke consists, in my case, in bringing the handle of the racket a little further round, so that the flat part comes more directly in contact with the base of the thumb, and the thumb itself I generally place along the racket handle to give additional support.*

their game undeveloped. They have not learnt to volley.

The reason for that is this—one sees it happening constantly—a promising young player, with good, hard, accurate ground strokes, enters for tournaments; she finds that when she abandons her base-line game for volleying attacks at the net, she is passed or lobbed, and defeated; therefore, in order to win—always the primary object in tournament play—she returns to the

tournament play becomes an obstacle in the way of a rising star. Constant practice and serious training are needed apart from tournaments, apart from all contests in which the primary object is to win, no matter how. Unless one is equipped with an all-round game, one can never be more than half confident, one will always be conscious of vulnerability; whilst for the all-round player the boot should be on the other leg—the opponent's weakness



has only to be discovered to be exploited.

Secondly, therefore, after concentration, application, and the taking of infinite pains, the most important rule in learning stroke production is to avoid concentrating on any one stroke to the neglect of others, and if you have a weakness, to work at it until it disappears.

#### GROUND STROKES : GRIP AND THE BACKHAND DIFFICULTY.

I will take ground strokes before considering the technique of volleying. Only a few exceptional players find the backhand easier than the forehand, and the great majority avoid backhand strokes whenever they can do so without putting themselves at a disadvantage. One's wrist has more natural resistance against being bent backwards than against being bent forwards. If you lay your arms naturally and easily along the arms of an armchair, with the hands projecting over the ends, and relax entirely, your hands drop down; but if you lay your arms so that the hands rest palms upwards, they do not drop down in the same way. Fatigue tends to make one's hands droop like this, and so also to make one shirk backhanders. (Those who have seen the well-known play "Bella Donna" will recollect that the doctor in the piece observed extreme lassitude and feebleness in the wrists of his patient, caused by slow poison.) But the part played by the wrist in making an ordinary backhand stroke is generally the opposite to its movement for the forehand, and so involves a muscular reaction against the wrist's natural weakness and tendency to bend forwards.

Some people try to get over these difficulties by quickly changing the racket to the other hand when a backhander is



MEETING A FAST BALL ON THE BACKHAND SIDE.

*The face of the racket is almost vertical and the weight is on the right foot.*

coming. There is nothing wrong in doing this. It looks awkward, probably because it is not the best method to adopt in the circumstances. Apart from the inevitable loss of time in changing hands, there is another reason why no first-class player ever does it. Truly ambidextrous individuals are extremely rare. The vast majority who are not thus favoured by Nature, being either right-handed or left-handed, do all that they have to do, including tennis strokes both fore- and backhand, better with the one hand than with the other. Weakness on the backhand side can be overcome by practice and perseverance.

Most players change their grip for a backhand stroke from their forehand one.



I do so myself; but that should not necessarily influence my readers. Some teachers advise always keeping the same grip, and there are some prominent players who do not change their grip. William Johnstone is an outstanding example of one who does not often change his grip. Moreover, his wonderful forehand drive is the envy of almost everyone. But those who try to copy his style generally find that the results are most unsatisfactory. Taking, as he does, a normal backhand grip for the forehand drive, the idea is to swipe at the ball with a big swing, giving it a terrific

punch with any amount of top spin. The usual result at a first attempt, on the part of an imitator, is to hit it ignominiously down into the net.

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Johnstone, like a good many other first-class players, has evolved a style of his own, peculiarly characteristic of himself; and I believe that there is more hope for a promising young player who develops his or her own individuality than for one who slavishly copies the best players of the day. My advice, therefore, is, if it is natural and comfortable for you to change your grip for a backhand stroke, then change it, and do your utmost to perfect both sides of your game. The change, however, must be quite automatic and unpremeditated, like the song of Shelley's skylark. If it is natural and easy for you to make your backhand volleys with the same grip as the forehand, you have a slight advantage in net play, when small fractions of a second count for much in shifting the racket from one side to the other.

#### CHANGING ONE'S GRIP AND MEETING THE UNEXPECTED.

For the forehand drive I grip with the flat part of the racket handle against that part of the palm of the hand which forms the base of the thumb, about where, according to the palmists, the line of life comes. The change for a backhand stroke consists, in my case, in bringing the handle of the racket a little further round, so that the flat part comes more directly in contact with the base of the thumb, and the thumb itself I generally place along the racket handle to give additional support. Although the change is evidently a very small one when thus analysed, it



A BACKHAND DRIVE: FIRST POSITION.

*The racket swung well back and the weight of the body on the left foot.*



makes all the difference between a weak shot, with little control of direction or elevation, and one that is made with confidence and placed with assurance. But I cannot emphasise too strongly that such a change of grip must be quite automatic and unconscious.

It is impossible to say how much of one's game must obey this last rule, or to state definitely where reflex action leaves off and conscious effort begins. Certainly one must have the power of responding automatically to various more or less unexpected demands upon one's stroke production. For example, on the average grass court it is often impossible to tell, by careful watching of one's opponent's action, whether the ball that is coming to one is going to bounce up or keep low. One must be equally capable of dealing with either, whether on the back- or forehand side, and slight modifications of grip are necessary for taking a high bounding ball as compared with a low one on the back-hand side. A fast low ball on the backhand side is generally the most difficult to deal with, especially as regards the control of the direction of one's return. For such a stroke the wrist must be firm and supple at the same time. Some people find it very difficult to grip tightly whilst at the same time allowing the wrist all its freedom of movement, and a little practice in making the movements with a racket alone, and also in hitting up against a wall, may be very helpful.

The tendency to shirk backhand strokes on the part of beginners, and even of players who have attained some success, is just as common as, and still more disastrous than, the tendency to shirk volleys and retire to the back of the court. By running round and avoiding backhanders you reduce your power of covering the

court by nearly fifty per cent., and give your adversary a corresponding advantage.

#### EYESIGHT AND ITS USE IN PLAY.

Those who fail to make progress beyond a certain point often argue that having a good eye is the beginning and end of the whole matter, and that they cannot get any further because their eye is not good enough. Certainly one cannot make a stroke without seeing the ball that is to be hit, but merely seeing it is not enough. Anyone can do that who is not blind, and, strange though it may sound, having a good eye has not much to do with eyesight.



A BACKHAND DRIVE: SECOND POSITION AND INSTANT OF IMPACT.

*The weight of the body has come forward on to the right foot.*





A BACKHAND DRIVE: THIRD POSITION.  
*The follow-through after the ball has been struck.*

Almost any eye that sees is good enough, providing that its owner works correctly with it. The time when it is most difficult to watch the ball is the instant at which it is struck. Anyone can easily verify this by trying actually to see the racket hit the ball. Most players are familiar with the difficulty of telling whether a ball that pitches close to a line is in or out when they are also trying to hit it. I have often played a stroke, and realised immediately afterwards the reason why it was a failure—because I took my eye off the ball just at the last instant.

Having a good eye, therefore, consists

more in the capacity for watching the ball than in having eyesight that is optically perfect. Quite a number of successful lawn tennis players wear glasses, which means, of course, that their eyesight is far from being optically perfect. The only time when one need not follow the ball is just before one's opponent is going to hit it. By watching your opponent's racket as it meets the ball you can get advance information of the greatest value about the direction in which the ball is likely to come. The necessity for watching the ball most carefully in making one's own stroke is due to the extreme importance of "timing." A minute fraction of a second in timing makes all the difference in the result of one's stroke. There is only one correct psychological instant for hitting the ball, and the eye alone can tell you when it arrives.

The eye must also tell one at what pace the ball that has to be returned is coming towards one, and it is of the utmost importance that this information should be correct, or, rather, that a correct judgment should be formed about the pace of the approaching ball, so that one may be properly prepared for hitting it at

the required angle and with the right amount of strength. It is the commonest thing for beginners, when they have to take fast balls, to hit them far out over the lines partly because they misjudge the speed and partly also because they do not know how to modify their strokes to meet balls of varying speeds.

Having a good eye, therefore, involves a great deal more than being able fairly easily to hit the ball with the middle of one's racket; it involves much judgment, and such judgments have to be made instantly, without any time for weighing the evidence. They come very near to being reflex actions.

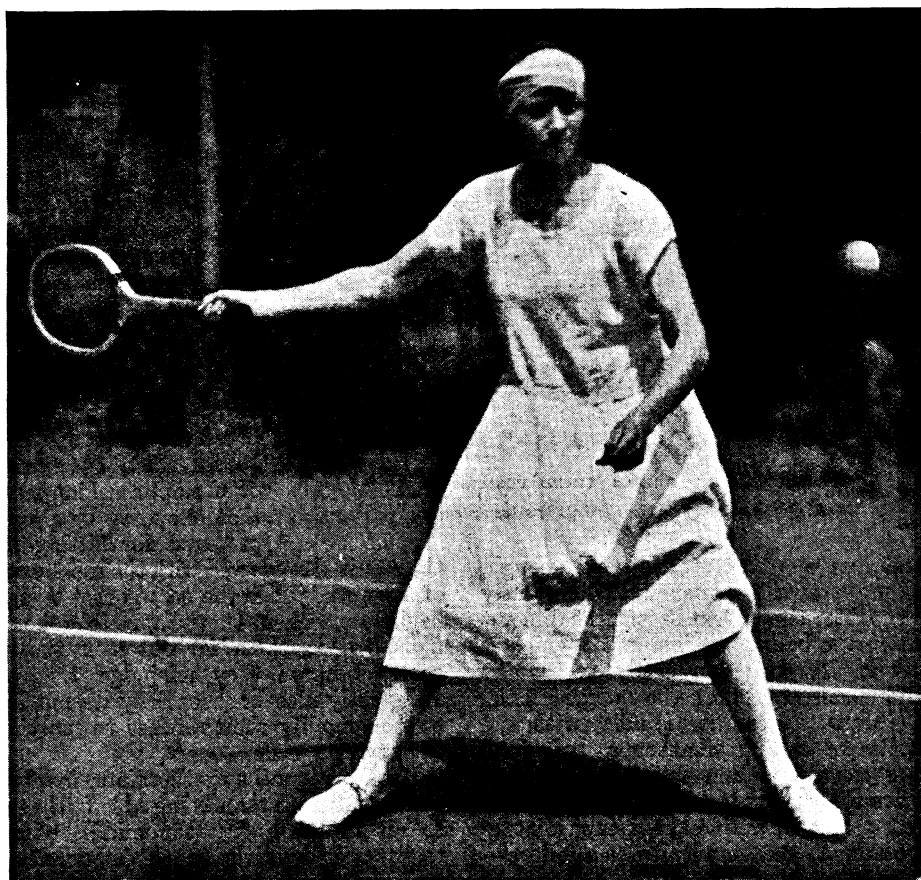


### THE FEET AND THE PART THEY MUST PLAY.

A certain degree of orthodoxy has been established in the matter of footwork, so far as ground strokes are concerned. The ordinary rules are that for a right-handed player the forehand drive should be made with the left foot forward, the weight of the body coming on to it with the swing of the racket, the other foot coming forward with the follow-through. For the corresponding backhand stroke it is, of course, the right foot that should be advanced, and the weight of the body should swing forward on to it from the left foot. This sounds quite simple and straightforward, and it is easy to make these movements with a racket, and easy also to drive a ball over the net in the correct way—a ball that one bounces oneself. But very different conditions are liable to arise when the ball is driven at one by a skilful opponent from the other

side of the net. However well or ill one's feet may be placed and moved, one quickly realises that balance of the body, timing, and distance from the ball are all-important. If one gets too close to the ball and tries to make the stroke with a backward jerk of the body that brings its weight on to the heels, the chances are that the shot will be a total failure. Good footwork on the court consists more in agility and ready responsiveness on the part of one's feet than in any slavish following of the rules of orthodoxy.

Here inevitably the comparison with dancing suggests itself. The feet of a good dancer go of their own accord in time to the music. The movements are unpremeditated, easy and natural, yet they are according to rule. Footwork at lawn tennis must be the same. There is no time to stop and think of the rules. One's feet must do the right thing of their own accord. They must be always ready, and for that it is,



A FOREHAND DRIVE.

*The ball is about to be struck at the top of its bound.*



of course, fatal to stand planted on one's heels. One must always be ready to make a move in any direction whatever, and to make it as rapidly as lies within one's power. One is constantly in the position of a sprinter waiting for the start of a hundred yards race.

When running for a ball, one must endeavour to reach the position for making the stroke with the feet in their proper places for a backhand or a forehand, as the case may be ; and this again sounds quite simple, but the beginner will naturally object that it is obviously out of the question to measure the distance and count the footsteps to be taken. The answer is that one's natural agility, inherited, no doubt, from prehistoric arboreal ancestors, must do the measurement and count the steps for one with lightning automatic precision. One can guide, direct, and improve one's natural agility by concentration and practice. It

is the common experience of beginners, and those who have given up play for any considerable time, that they get too close to the ball to make a proper stroke ; but once this fault is realised, practice can cure it.

#### CORRECT TIMING AND QUICKNESS OF DECISION.

In making both forehand and backhand strokes, the ball should be hit at or before the top of its bound. A common tendency of beginners is to wait too long before striking, in an unconscious endeavour to get a better view of the ball and general grasp of the situation before making the stroke. This tendency towards deliberation is particularly marked in the case of most British players, whose mentality generally favours caution and the avoidance of seemingly unnecessary risk. But by waiting you almost always sacrifice more than you can possibly gain. You give your



RETRIEVING A LOW AND DIFFICULT BALL ON THE FOREHAND SIDE.

adversary that vital extra instant which enables him to get into position and to prepare fully to counter your return ; also you sacrifice much possible efficiency in length and pace by striking the ball when it has passed the top of its flight and is dropping towards the ground.

Quickness of eye and speed of decision are necessary for hitting the ball at or before the top of its bound, and this becomes comparatively easy and natural after one has been playing for some time, when one has got one's eye in, as the popular phrase puts it.

#### CUT STROKES : WHEN AND HOW TO USE THEM.

The question may be asked whether any cut should be put on the ball, and in general it may be said that this depends entirely upon circumstances. There are times when a lot of "lift" should be used—that is to say, the face of the racket should be drawn



sharply upwards as the ball is struck, the strings thus drawing upwards against the ball and imparting top spin, which causes its flight to dip down sooner than it would do if it were struck squarely. There are times when the opposite kind of spin or cut should be imparted to the ball. A cut should always be imparted to the ball in making a drop shot—that is to say, a ball that is deliberately played to drop just over the net when one's opponent is at the back of the court and so unable to reach it; and since the object of such a stroke is to defeat the opponent, a cut should be imparted to the ball to make it bounce as little as possible. One of the quaintest old traditions, to which some people still adhere, is that such a stroke is *mean*. This idea is, of course, absurd to anyone who takes part in modern lawn tennis of good class, and drop shots actually

require a great deal of skill and judgment to be successful.

So each argument—the discussion of any kind of stroke—leads us back finally to the mental side of the game. Intelligence is necessary for good play, as well as correct movement, speed and strength, and that is just one of the chief conditions that make the game so fascinating. The kind of intelligence that is required may be very different from that which is needed to take a science degree at a University, but they have this in common—the necessity for concentration and application. Staleness, with accompanying failure, supervenes when enthusiasm is allowed to flag, simply because the faculties are then divided and concentration is impossible. The spirit of boredom must be utterly banished if success at lawn tennis is to be achieved.

*A further article by Miss McKane in  
the next number will deal with  
Service.*



## THE GOOD COMRADE.

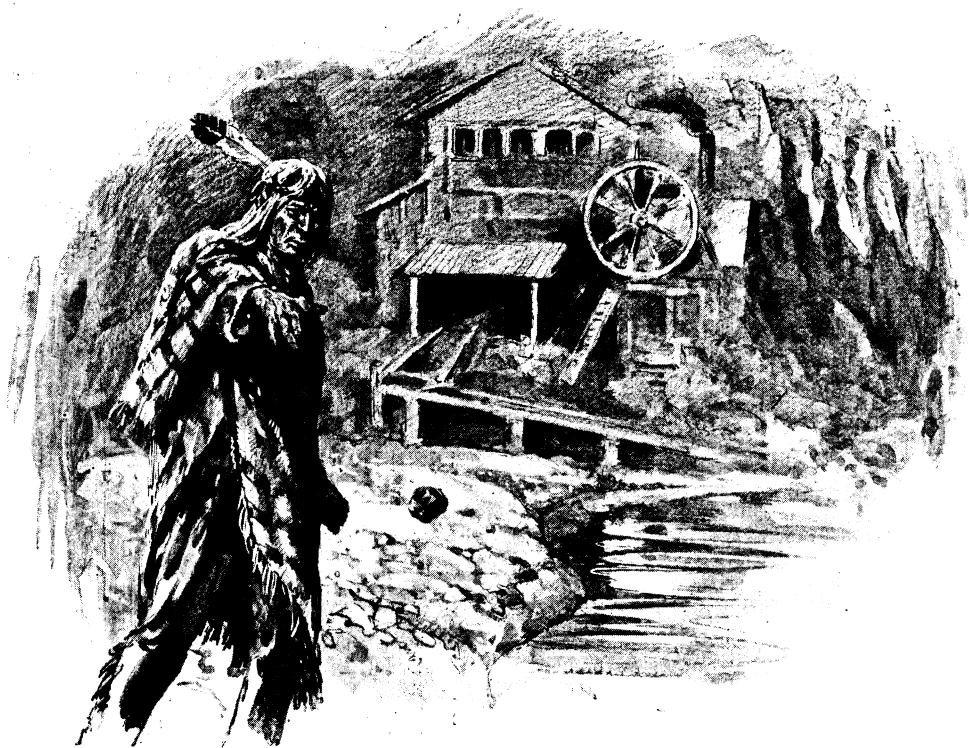
**W**HAT of the heart you bring me, lad?  
You think its warmth shall cheer the wold,  
A gipsy fire to keep me glad—  
But if your heart grows cold?

What of the trusty sword you bring?  
To meet all peril for my sake,  
To smite for me each hurtful thing—  
But if your sword should break?

No, I must stand and step alone,  
With mine own heart a-burning free,  
And wield a falchion all mine own—  
But—if you'll walk with me?

ANNE PAGE.





"He turned it over in his smooth, callous palm for a moment, then pitched it into the lake."

# TRADE

By ALAN SULLIVAN

ILLUSTRATED BY DUDLEY TENNANT

**A**JIDAMO, the Squirrel, pushed his way through the undergrowth. He had been walking thus, silently and observantly, for hours, while he made the round of his traps. Like a brown ghost he came, guided by a broken twig here, an overturned leaf there, and other signs so faint as to be imperceptible save to the eye of an aborigine. It was mid-afternoon when he reached a ridge where most of the rock was bare, and the forest pushed up close on either side. Close to the ridge, in a clump of ground hemlock, was a stream on whose banks the snow still lay a few inches deep. Beside the stream glinted a small steel trap. In the trap was a mink with russet-brown fur.

Ajidamo grunted complacently, opened

the spring, dropped his quarry into a sack, where it nestled softly against an otter and a stone marten, then took his way silently along the ridge. He did not hurry. The day was fine, and he was at home wherever sunset might overtake him.

Three hundred yards further on lay a young Norway pine overthrown by winter winds. Its black roots lifted grotesquely into the air and carried patches of earth and moss. In one of these tangles Ajidamo noticed a piece of rock different from any he had ever seen. It was strongly gripped, as though in a man's hand, and the level rays of the sun seemed to pass through it. He looked at it curiously. To the ordinary observer it would have resembled a bit of semi-transparent alabaster enclosing a twist

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of gilded lace To a mining man it would have been a sample of high-grade, free-milling gold ore. But to Ajidamo it was only something different. And just for that reason he knocked it free, examined it closely with unwinking black eyes, and dropped it in beside the stone marten.

He tramped on, slept that night five miles away, continued his silent pilgrimage another twenty miles, and reached his winter camp at sundown. Here he thawed out his take, pulled the precious skins inside out over the slim red bodies, threw the bodies into the pot, and stretched the fur over thin, wedge-shaped pieces of wood. He thought nothing more about the piece of rock, till presently the oldest grandchild, rummaging in the sack with reddened fingers, pulled the thing out. Ajidamo took it, held it questioningly toward his daughter, and, when she shook her head, tossed the fragment carelessly back.

Storms raged and ceased, snow fell and melted, the sun grew stronger, water began to run over the rocks, the wilderness seemed to yawn luxuriously in the growing warmth after months of rigid slumber, and presently spring came to the Northern wilderness. There was a slackening of the bones of earth, the whiteness of rabbit fur became patched with dirty brown, from the skies drifted the calling of geese and swans on the long trek to the Arctic, and a thousand streams burst their manacles and went singing through the woods. It was at this time that Ajidamo gathered together his winter's catch. Then he lifted his canoe from the place where it had lain covered with spruce boughs since last November, sewed up its gaping seams with fine strips of tamarac root, sealed them with cloth dipped in hot resin, and went off to the nearest Hudson Bay post, which was a hundred miles away, as quietly as a dry leaf moves in front of a puff of wind.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Hudson Bay factor is a taciturn man, clothed generally in nondescript garments and always with a great authority. His word goes forth as the law of the Northern wilderness, because it has never been broken. To Ojibway and Iroquois, to Yellow-knife and Cree, to Piegan and Blackfoot, that word is the same. When it comes to a matter of trade, the bargain is hard and the terms are stiff, but the faith is absolute. Thus it happens that in a season of the year the hunters turn from the smoke of a thousand camp fires and push their canoes over leagues of water, black and brown, by

lake and rapid and cataract, to do business as their fathers did it, and with the offspring of those who traded with their fathers.

Thus came Ajidamo to the post on Crooked Lake. He came at his own pace, a leisurely twenty miles a day, observing much on the journey, for when one lives by eye and ear and the strength of one's sinews, there is much to be learned be one ever so old, and Ajidamo was only seventy. He caught a few fish, mostly in the rapids, where pickerel were to be had for the taking, snared a few rabbits, drank a good deal of tea and smoked incessantly. In the bottom of the canoe, tied neatly in the sack, were mink, otter, marten, a few fisher skins and one cross fox. He hoped for a good deal from the latter.

Nearing the post, he fell in with others on the same errand. Some he knew personally, such as Wa-wa, the Wild Goose, and Ah-tick, the Caribou, but they did not talk much, making camp the last night a little way apart on the river's bank, so that their fires blinked like a succession of the red eyes of animals that came down in the dark to drink when drinking could be done safely. Nor was there any hustling for bargains when the post was reached, it being common knowledge that prices did not vary. Each of them came up in turn, emptied his catch on the rough-hewn counter, and waited voicelessly till the Factor had checked the number of skins and formed his own opinion of their condition and value. And while he waited, there was a swift, narrow-eyed scrutiny of the loaded shelves, bulging with all that the heart of man, woman, or child could desire. Not the least thing to the credit of Ajidamo and his friends was the fact that no Hudson Bay post reported losses by theft.

When it came to Ajidamo's turn, he up-ended his sack, and with the fur there tumbled out that forgotten fragment of rock. It fell to the floor, lying unnoticed till the bargaining was done. Ajidamo owed fifty dollars from last year, and when this had been liquidated he still found himself able to get most of the things he wanted—cloth, a red shawl for his daughter, powder for recharging Winchester cartridges, lead, three new traps, a four-pound axe head, a net with four-inch mesh for white-fish, a slab of salt pork, tea, sugar, baking-powder. These he collected, making a neat pile that rose beside him. The Factor put in a pound of tobacco as a present, then leaned forward.



"What's yon bit of rock?"

Ajidamo gave it to him and shook his head. "I don't know. Maybe no good."

The Factor twisted it between his hard fingers. "Where did it come from?"

Ajidamo made a gesture that took in the entire country lying north of Crooked Lake. "Up there. Long way. Me find him two months gone—I guess no good."

Followed a little silence. There were rumours of gold in the district, talks of gold around a good many camp fires, and a trickle of prospectors from the area further south. The Factor had a month-old paper that came in by dog team the week before, and there was an article in that. He didn't take it very seriously. This was a good fur country, and that ought to be enough for him, and he didn't know anything about minerals. But one could never tell. He turned the thing round so that the light fell into it, and thought it very pretty.

"Want it?" he asked Ajidamo.

The old hunter shook his head. "Me think no good," he said, and gathered up his purchases.

\* . \* \* \*

Kelly was plainly out of luck. He lay on his back in his tent, slapped at mosquitoes and cursed creation in general. For a year now he had been scratching rock to no purpose. Other men had made good strikes, cleaned up a pile, and had either got out of the country or else done the same thing over again. But on the Abitibi River the Irish seemed to have lost their luck.

Added to this was the sobering fact that he was nearly broke. The small sum of forty dollars separated him from that bankruptcy which meant that he would have to work for someone else, a fate that all real prospectors dread. To get up in the morning and feel that you couldn't go where you wanted to go was something worse than death. It stared Kelly in the face now. If one adds to this the further truth that he was nearly out of grub, the venom of his language will be the more understandable.

He lighted a pitch-pine knot, took a torn map from his packsack and studied it intently. It was thumbled and mutilated beyond repair, but still decipherable. In the flicker, and between slaps at the mosquitoes, which were now worse than before, he saw that the post of Crooked Lake lay about two days' journey off. H B P, the map said, from which Kelly

knew that there was to be obtained there all that made life feasible in the wilderness. He reckoned that the district was no good, never had been and never would be any good, but, because he was in the middle of it, decided to give it just one more chance. So at daybreak he started off, making a bee-line for Crooked Lake, and wondering what the Scotchman, who was bound to be in charge, would have the nerve to ask for a fifty-pound sack of self-rising flour. He arrived on the eve of the second day in a worse temper than ever. Mackintosh looked in his angry eye and waited placidly. He was a man of experience.

"'Twill be ten cents a pound, cash," he said easily.

Kelly gulped. "It's a hold-up—three cents a pound in Toronto."

"Ye're no forced to buy it if ye dinna want it," said Mackintosh.

"You know I've got to buy it, but it's a hell of a price."

"Maybe. I'm not disputin' that, but it didn't exactly fly here, ye ken."

"Can I have twenty dollars credit?"

Mackintosh shook his head. "If ye were an Indian; but I'll no trust a white man in this country." He paused a moment. "Happen ye're not a squaw man? That might help."

This left Kelly breathless, and he rocked with anger. "Think I'd marry an Indian?" he hissed.

"Ye might do a sight waur," said Mackintosh calmly. "I've married ane mysel'. D'ye want that flour?"

Kelly swallowed his wrath and bought. With the flour were other things, and while the Factor sorted them out, his visitor's eye fell on a fragment of rock that glinted whitely on a corner shelf.

"What's that?" he said, pointing.

"Naethin' but a bit that ane of ma customers left here last winter. D'ye ken what it is?"

Kelly fingered the thing, and his pulse began to pound. Never in his dreams had he seen a specimen like this. A thousand dollars to the ton if it was worth a cent.

"Careful," he whispered to himself, "careful now!" and laid it casually back on the counter.

"It might be worth following up. Where does the Indian live? I'll drop in if I'm in that direction."

"I'm no sure where he is the noo, but he wintered on Loon Lake. That's a hundred mile from here."



"What's he call himself?" Kelly's voice creaked a little.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ajidamo sat in the sun, making a new cedar paddle which would be as light as a feather. One end of it was against his

Kelly floated up half an hour later, laid his own paddle across the thwarts, leaned forward and lit his pipe.

"Boozhoo," he said.

"Boozhoo," replied Ajidamo. "Meno keejegud."



"The paddle took shape under Ajidamo's firm, brown fingers."

stomach, and he drew the knife toward him with long, smooth strokes, while the shavings fell away in neat, regular curls. Presently he saw a distant flicker on the glassy water. There was a white man coming.

Kelly admitted that it was a fine day, took another look at the camp, and came ashore. He had given a good deal of thought to this interview. When one dealt with an Indian, the thing was not to be too



earnest or impetuous. It made the other fellow suspicious. One led up to what one wanted, then touched on it casually in passing. So he, too, lay in the sun and talked generalities of the wilderness, while the paddle took shape under Ajidamo's firm, brown fingers. It was not till evening that he got round to the subject.

"Some," said Ajidamo, and put a kettle on the fire.

"Smoke?" Kelly tossed over a plug of tobacco.

The ancient aristocrat nodded, filled his pipe, and relapsed into silence. He wasn't interested, or even amused. He ripped up the belly of a five-pound pickerel, carved out its backbone with two swift strokes, and laid it in the pan. Kelly contributed a lump of salt pork. The meal was shared without speech. Kelly glanced at the grave, aquiline face and felt like choking, but it was no use trying to hustle a man for



"Much rock about here?"

"Much fur last winter?"

The old man waved a hand at the purple horizon. "Plenty rock—some places." He knew what Kelly sought before the canoe touched shore, and Kelly knew that he knew. But that didn't alter anything.

"Much fur last winter?"

whom time and space and riches and the world in general did not exist. Still, there remained the outrageous fact that this relic of a vanishing race possessed knowledge that was worth a barrel of money. He decided to wait a little longer.

An hour before sunset he unrolled his



blankets, and there fell out a piece of white quartz. He pitched it across to Ajidamo.

"Ever see any rock like that?"

Ajidamo fingered it, and knew at once all about it—the upturned Norway pine, earth and moss in its roots, and this glistening in the sun. So that was what had brought the stranger. He rather liked Kelly, because the latter hadn't jumped down his throat, bombarding him with questions. There was a way of doing everything—even talking about rocks.

"Over there," he said, pointing west. "Me see him last spring."

"Far?"

"Two days."

Kelly laid a hot coal in the bowl of his pipe just to make sure of his nerves. They were quite steady.

"How much-go there?"

Ajidamo considered this patiently. He usually asked two dollars and a half a day for what little work he had ever done, and he never got anything for the return trip, because one place was the same as another as far as he was concerned. But this time, and since something assured him that Kelly was very much in earnest, he decided to take a chance and double the charge.

"Ten dollars," he said.

Kelly shook his head. "Too much. Give you five."

\* \* \* \* \*

Paterson had a combined office and residence on the outskirts of the town of Porcupine, a wooden structure twelve by twenty-four. Over the door was a large sign: "Mines and Mining Shares Bought and Sold." He lived in the other end—twelve by twelve. In the office were shelves carrying samples of ore from various properties. The sight of them was apt to impress a client, and helped to keep up his enthusiasm, for he had never bought a share or sold a mine. His capital was five thousand dollars.

He was lounging about in front when Kelly came up the road, staggering under a packsack, which, though it was only half filled, seemed extremely heavy. He dropped it opposite the office for a rest, and Paterson caught the grinding creak of broken rock. He strolled over and offered the stranger a cigarette.

"Got anything?"

Kelly glanced at the broad, red, good-natured face and rather liked it.

"I've got the original horned mint," he said. "What have you got?"

"A bottle and a few thousand dollars. What's your hurry?"

Kelly brightened, then hesitated. "What do you call a few?"

"Enough to buy the real thing when I see it. And the other stuff isn't wood alcohol."

Kelly went in. Paterson was right about the bottle, and it was some time before they got round to the packsack. Neither wanted to seem in a hurry, and Paterson played the same rôle as Kelly when the latter did diplomatic work in the camp of Ajidamo. The scale of intelligence ascended.

The up-ended packsack disgorged its burden. Gold, and lots of it—gold in little filaments and plates and grains, frozen, seemingly, in the milky quartz. Paterson had seen nothing like this before.

"Not so bad," he said evenly. "Where is it?"

Kelly laughed at him. The latter had had a good many drinks, but his mind was fairly clear.

"Nothing doing, pilgrim. I'm no free information bureau."

Paterson passed on undisturbed. He didn't expect to be told yet, but it was worth trying.

"Much of it?"

That was horse sense, and Kelly loosened up.

"She's about eight hundred feet long and seven wide. I stripped her in seven places—all about the same. Some of it's richer than this, and some not so good. Can you beat it?"

Paterson had a lump in his throat. "Far from the water?"

"About a quarter mile."

"Hard to get at?"

"Easy as drink."

"There's another bottle," said Paterson.

He went into the back room and prised up a plank in the floor. Precious stuff, this, saved over for just such an occasion. His heart was jumping about, so he poured himself a drink very slowly to try his nerve. Nothing spilled. He returned, comforted and resolute, and put the bottle on the table.

"Cut loose, stranger. What's your name and your price?"

Kelly leaned back luxuriously. He had been thinking about the price ever since Ajidamo led him up to the overturned Norway pine, and he actually saw the thing he had dreamed of for years. The figure had varied a good deal on the way out, but never got any smaller. In the glow



of the present moment he decided to take a chance and double it.

"I want ten thousand down, twenty in three months, and another twenty in six."

"Give you half that, and it's a deal," said Paterson.

\* \* \* \* \*

James Randolph, of New York, sat at a corner table in the dining-room of the Porcupine Hotel. He was a quiet man, very silent, and had a keen grey eye. There was nothing conspicuous about Randolph, nothing to betray the fact that he was a noted geologist; nothing to suggest that he represented enough money to buy the entire township and all in it twice over. He ate slowly and without interest, glancing occasionally at the very mixed assemblage. It was nothing unusual to him.

Two strangers came in and annexed the adjoining table, one large, red-faced, and of the type recognisable as "mining broker," the other evidently just out of the woods. They were not drunk, but very cheerful, and Randolph wondered where they got it. One ate peas with his knife, very neatly and without spilling any, while the other, apparently not hungry, ranged a row of quartz specimens in front of his plate. Randolph noted these, and forgot about their owner. Ten minutes later he strolled out, took a chair on the verandah near the dining-room door, and began to smoke thoughtfully.

"Eight hundred long, seven wide, and pans heavy all the way. She's the original nickel-plated mint, pilgrim, and you ought to be tickled down the back." The words came quite clearly.

Presently the large man appeared and struck off down the road. Randolph pitched away his cigarette and paced slowly in that direction.

At two o'clock Paterson had the thing pretty well thought out. He proposed to make his pile out of this one deal, as it was not likely anything of the same sort would come his way again. He had to find another twenty thousand in six months, so a fair price would be a hundred thousand in five. He was gloating over the samples when a stranger chanced in and asked the way to the Lockmaster Mine.

The latter got the information and was about to walk on, when he glanced casually at the specimens on Paterson's table.

"That looks to be pretty good stuff."

Paterson surmised that it was, the best

stuff that ever came out of the darned district, and, what's more, he owned it.

"Whereabouts?" asked the stranger.

Paterson grinned. "That exact information comes after a deal and not before it."

"Far from here?"

"No—easy as drink. Have one?"

"Guaranteed?"

"Have it, and see for yourself. You in the mining business?"

"In a sort of way. Friends of mine might put some money in. But I'm told there's been a lot lost up here."

Paterson chuckled. "Tain't lost if you know where it is."

Randolph didn't answer. He was wondering how much the other man knew about mines and mining.

"Is this much of a vein you've got?"

The figures came out, and he looked up rather wistfully.

"It's this way with me. I'm free to buy something for my friends to develop. That stuff seems to have gold in it, and in a general way I'm ready for a gamble. What's your price?"

Paterson told him, but he shook his head.

"Figure's too big for me. Doesn't matter. I'm going on to the silver country to-morrow, and just came over here for a look. I've real money to spend, but not as much as that. Must keep something for development." He got up, smiling. "Thanks for a real drink."

Paterson reflected. He'd rather like to say he'd bought a lode and sold it in four hours. And perhaps the late vendor was a bit of a liar. "Suppose you made an offer?"

"My limit is just half your price, and you'd have to show me the lode before you got the cheque."

"Just as the other fellow has to show me before he gets his, eh?"

"Exactly."

"Shake on it," said Paterson.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ajdamo had heard it all afternoon, a low, constant rumble that sounded like distant thunder, but was always in the same place. It grew louder as he paddled, till, rounding the point, he saw ahead a great gash in the wooded slope of the land. It was now something more than a year since he had been here last, and then he came to show a stranger the spot where a young Norway pine lay with its roots in the air.

He stopped paddling a quarter mile from



shore, and drifted motionless while comprehension slowly deepened in his dark eyes. Up the hill, and just at the spot he remembered, was a tall timber thing on top of which was a wheel that went round very fast. Below this descended a nest of great buildings. On one side houses, the only kind of house he had ever seen, with a white road running between them. There were a dock, two or three launches, scows, men sprinkled everywhere, long piles of wood, and always that queer rumble. Close to the water he saw a log shanty he took to be the store. At that he dipped his paddle, and the canoe moved as does a thought in the mind of a lazy man.

He got out on a strip of sand that wasn't there before. Sharp and very white, it was being carried down by a trough from the lowest and biggest building of all. He had never seen sand like that before. Ajidamo could not know that the ore from which it was crushed had lain three hundred feet below the roots of the Norway pine. He could not know that the Broadvenue Mine—thus christened because its owners did business in a marble-lined eyrie near the corner of the two most famous streets of a very famous city—had repaid its purchase price in the first month's run. He could not know what happened to Kelly or Paterson, or any of them, nor would he have cared. What he did know was that his share of all this was five dollars. And at that he grunted softly.

The storekeeper at the Broadvenue was not versed in the ways of the country, also he knew nothing and cared nothing about Indians. So when Ajidamo came in on moccasined feet and, unwrapping four silver dollars from a bit of caribou skin, asked for flour, he got much less than he should have

had. This time the price was doubled, not halved. Nor was he given a plug of tobacco, which was gross discourtesy as well as a tactical error, and in general he received such treatment as no Hudson Bay factor would have dreamed of extending to a member of the most ancient family of the land.

"Is that all you want?"

"Yes," said Ajidamo.

"Then clear out, and take this. Don't eat it—it's to wash with. You need it."

Ajidamo looked at him, but did not touch the soap. The young man, knowing Third Avenue, thought he knew everything, but did not understand that look. There was dignity in it, and a silent pride born of thousands of years of freedom, and a sort of vague wonder. The aged hunter had become used to something different, and a certain mutual civility, and prices that, if hard, were at least stable. So he felt that this change, and these bad manners, and the rumble that shook the earth, and this short measure, were in a way all his own fault. Furthermore, everyone seemed to be doing well in this matter except himself. He picked up the flour and went slowly out.

Halting on the white sand, he took a piece of quartz from his pocket. It was about the same size as the first one, but infinitely richer, and nearly half gold. He had found it three months previously in a spot only a day's journey distant, but in such a corner that it was very unlikely to be found again. The last piece had earned five dollars, and he had hoped that this one would bring him as much. Perhaps it was worth ten.

He turned it over in his smooth, callous palm for a moment, then pitched it into the lake.







“What are you when you're not a shepherd?” she asked.”

# THE DRYAD

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. FLEMING WILLIAMS

**W**ESTON burst into the cottage like a gale of wind, plunged into the living-room, and made straight for the sideboard, whereon stood a tantalus large enough to compromise an archbishop. His hair was wet and tousled, his face damp with perspiration, there was blood on his forehead, and his eyes were wild. Hanniford, who had been deep in a book, uncurled himself from a comfortable position in the adjustable reading chair and sat bolt upright

to stare, while his friend helped himself liberally to whisky and drank it neat.

“I've seen them!” Weston gasped.

“You'll see some more if you have another tot like that. What were they? Snakes?”

Weston began to laugh. “I swear I'm scared,” he said. “A kind of panic got hold of me, and I had to run.”

“Poor lad! Who's been knocking you about?”

Weston pressed the back of his hand to



his brow, and then glanced at the stain on his knuckles. "That was a branch of a tree," he said. "I bumped into it while I was running. You'll laugh at me when I tell you. But when I'd been looking at them for a minute——"

He broke off suddenly to giggle confusedly under the spell of Hanniford's direct, unwavering stare. Hanniford was a tall, big, loosely-knit young man, with a rugged, kindly face, a mass of unruly dark hair, and a pair of grey eyes which were at once humorous and piercing. Weston was small and lean, sharp-featured, weaselish, and wore the stamp of physical and moral weakness. The world had not been kind to him, and he had conspired with the world against himself. The two men had little or nothing in common, save that they had been together in the same regiment during the War. About a month since, when Hanniford had found his old comrade-in-arms debauched, nerve-ridden, nearly penniless, he was minded to try his hand as a reformer. He had already arranged to take a furnished cottage in the depths of the country, where he intended to spend the summer hard at work. He brought Weston with him, and, by dint of coaxing and bullying, had already wrought a considerable improvement.

Weston submitted to his own reformation with a fairly good grace. Nominally Hanniford was his friend, but their relations were like those of parent and child or master and servant. Hanniford prescribed exercise—"That's what you're most in need of, my lad"—and Weston obediently walked six miles twice daily. It was now ten o'clock at night, and the patient had just completed his second six miles.

"Suppose you begin at the beginning," Hanniford suggested quietly. "Kick off with 'Once upon a time.'"

Weston sat down in a low chair, gasped, and mopped his brow. "I've had an adventure with the Classics," he remarked, grinning sheepishly. "What's the name of that heathen god who plays the bagpipes in forests? I don't mean Orphy-us. The bloke that wears goatskin how-d'you-do's and goes chasin' nymphs."

"Pan?" suggested Hanniford.

"Ah, that's the bloke. Thanks! Sorry my classical knowledge isn't up to yours. I left school at fourteen to learn shorthand."

"You haven't been seeing Pan," said Hanniford. "People who see him are supposed to die."

"No, I didn't see him," said Weston,

still grinning sheepishly, "but I heard him, and I saw the nymphs."

"You're fortunate," said Hanniford drily. "Most people in your condition have to be satisfied with rats and spiders."

"I'm not joking. I swear I'm not. They were all dancing in the moonlight—six or eight of them—to a thin reedy sort of music which came out of the trees. Don't look at me like that, Hanny. I promise you——"

"All right. And where did these interesting phenomena take place?"

"In the wood over there." Weston jerked a thumb over his shoulder. "I took a short cut home that way."

"To dodge some of the six miles, I suppose?"

"No. I walked a bit further than usual. I got as far as the inn at Great Wryfold. Yes, I know what you're thinking, and you're wrong. I had one half-pint of bitter—you can ask the landlord to-morrow, if you don't believe me. And, coming back, I thought I'd cut through the wood. It's private, but I know the paths, and I didn't expect to meet anything worse than a keeper."

"Well, it was pretty dark in there, in spite of the moon. I'd no idea the leaves were so thick. Here and there the moonlight lay on the ground like patches of snow, but I had to feel my way most of the time. I'd come about half-way—in fact, I'd just reached the stream with the little plank bridge across it and the double railings—when I heard a sort of music. It was coming out of the wood on my right—a thin reedy sound which was weird enough, but somehow quite jolly. I stopped to listen, wondering what it could be, and after a while it stopped. Then it started again."

"Naturally I wondered who was playing what, and I thought of gipsies. I've heard they play tunes to snare things. So I thought I'd go an' have a look. The sound guided me pretty well. The music didn't go on all the time, but it never stopped for long. Once or twice I thought I heard voices in the distance, but I couldn't be sure."

"I'd got fairly near to the sound when suddenly I came right on the edge of a great clearing, and saw something that made me jump out of my skin. I couldn't see who was playing, although the moon looked bang into the clearing. Whoever it was must have been hidden out of sight among the trees or on the fringe of shadow, which was as black as if it had been painted in. But out



in the middle, full in the moonlight, six or eight girls were dancing.

"It wasn't just an ordinary dance they were doing, and they didn't look ordinary girls. They were bare-footed, and dressed in floating white flimsy things. I've seen pictures like them in the Academy and on some old vases in the British Museum. Wonderfully light and graceful they were. You'd almost swear their feet didn't touch the ground. And I noticed they'd all done their hair the same way, coiled round and round at the backs of their heads. They were dancing something like this."

He rose and executed a clumsy gambol.

"Either," said Hanniford drily, "it's a poor imitation, or your verbal description flatters them. But go on. What happened?"

"I was just thunderstruck at first, and went on staring. Then suddenly, for no particular reason, I got into the most almighty funk. It's pretty weird in that wood at night, and the whole thing seemed so unearthly. You know what my nerves are like. At any rate——"

"Panic," murmured Hanniford, "is derived from Pan. The mad, unreasoning fear which suddenly attacks cattle is said——"

"Thanks," said Weston, with a deprecatory giggle, "I know just what it's like! Well, suddenly they must have seen me, although they didn't say a word. They didn't speak the whole time. They just formed themselves into line, and, still keeping to the music, came dancing towards me in close formation. That finished it, so far as I was concerned. I let out one yell and ran for it. You told me to take exercise. Take it from me, I've had some. I bet I didn't take more than five minutes covering the mile between there and here."

Hanniford raised his eyebrows. "Pretty girls?" he asked.

"Pretty as pictures. But that didn't stop me from bolting."

Externally Hanniford was perfectly serious. "My dear fellow," he said, "you are very much to be congratulated. You have been privileged to witness a dance of hamadryads. It's a few score of centuries since any of them were seen. And the piper was very likely the Goat-foot himself. Lucky you didn't see *him*, my boy. Funny the nymphs should have made a rush at you. They used to be shy, but doubtless they've advanced with the times."

"What are hamadryads, anyway?" Weston demanded.

"Roughly, the spirits of the trees."

"Oh, I see, and what would have happened if they'd caught me?"

"Impossible to say. Probably you'd have fallen in love with one of them, and been turned into some specimen of *flora* for your pains. Yes, I think by this time you would have been a gorse bush of malignant aspect, and on your way to posterity as a beautiful myth. 'Weston and the Dryads'! Think of the sugary pictures which would have been hung in the Academy every year! You might have been given away with a Christmas annual along with 'The Sailor's Return' and 'Doggie's Little Sweet-heart.' Why, dash it, you might even have got into grand opera! Upon my word, Weston, I'm almost sorry it didn't happen."

Weston laughed to show that he realised that these remarks were meant to be humorous, and lit a cigarette with quick, nervous fingers.

"Of course," he said, "I know what I saw, all right. I knew it even when I was bolting for my life. That wood's in the grounds of Dorchland Place, and quite close to the house. The family are at home, I hear, and I dare say they've got some people staying with them."

"Well?"

"Well, these old Greek dances are being revived, aren't they? Hopping about bare-foot, and all that. It started in America, but a lot of Society people over here have taken it up. I've seen lots of—art photographs, don't they call them—in the illustrated weeklies. I knew all about that, but it didn't stop me from running. It was the *eeriness* of the whole thing——"

Hanniford interrupted him with a gran. "Upon my word," he exclaimed, "I don't know what to make of a chap like you. You have had a beautiful and unique experience, and you try to vulgarise it by putting forward a silly, prosaic theory like that! You have been privileged to see the dryads at their revels, and heard the piping of a faun. I understand it all quite well. They have left Greece. That is no great wonder to me, for I have been to Greece. Pan is not dead, after all. That was a lying voice which the sailors heard. What we thought was an otter the other night may have been a naiad. All that has been held to be beautiful and dead was only hidden, and remained to be discovered by a miserable little jelly-boned unimaginative rat like you, who want——"

"All right," said Weston good-



humouredly, "don't mind me. Carry on, sergeant!"

"To-morrow night," Hanniford continued, "you and I will visit that wood together and see——"

"We won't!" Weston interrupted sharply. "Not me. No second helpings. I know what I saw, and I don't believe in your nymphs and what-nots. But my nerves are all tizzy-wozzy, and you've no idea how weird it was."

"Then," said Hanniford, "I shall go by myself."

Weston dropped some cigarette ash on the carpet and rubbed it in with the toe of his shoe.

"Very well," he said, "that's *your* murder. But mind that old trout with the horns and the goat's legs doesn't get hold of you."

## II.

On the following night, as soon as dusk was fallen and the moon risen, Hanniford set forth, placidly smoking a pipe, and pursued down the garden path with humorous injunctions from Weston at the lighted window. It was a night for believing the old lore of the ancients, the dreams of long-dead poets and devotees of a forsaken cult. The air was as warm and scented as the breath from a hay-loft. A lazy breeze stirred the tree-tops, and in mid-air soft fleecy clouds moved drowsily, as if they were half asleep and unaware that Diana the huntress was abroad and on their trail.

The moonlight was nearly as strong as the light of a grey day. Hanniford could see for half a mile to where the dark mass of the wood screened the horizon. The slanting shadow of the hedge on his left made a ragged black border stretching far ahead of him down the lane, and his own shadow, elongated, spindle-shanked, an unkind caricature, kept pace beside him like some mocking ghostly companion.

Hanniford, looking up into the clear face of the moon, felt the magic of the night creeping into his blood. On such a night it was easy to believe—whatever one wanted to believe. And the stars, looking down, seemed to convey the pretence of watching only him, and being unconscious of the bright lights and vulgar riot of the cities, slums, and gin palaces, and tramcars groaning on their way through hideous suburbs.

The silence seemed complete until he listened intently, and then the night was full of tiny sounds. A kicked pebble rustled into the lane-side grass like some elfin

creature trying to hide from him. A tendrill of honeysuckle, brushed by his shoulder, whispered to him as he passed. Scarcely perceptible rustling of grass and leaves hinted that fairies were hiding and whispering together at his approach, sheltering under leaves and behind the seed of bearded grasses, and peeping out after him, finger on lip.

It was very dark in the wood, but here and there the moonlight lay like a scattering of silver flowers. The odour of the place was cool and damp and fragrant, like the smell of a river. Somewhere in the distance a night-jar was sawing busily, and around Hanniford the trees sighed and murmured like simple old folk who knew all about one another's troubles. And there were all manner of slight noises which seemed in vain to demand of him a definite explanation—rustlings of last year's leaves and a cracking of dry twigs under invisible feet. Yes, as Weston had said, it was certainly eerie in that wood at night.

Suddenly Hanniford came to an abrupt halt and listened—at first only to the low throbbing of his own pulses. But he had heard something, and strained his ears; and as the silence grew more intense, as if the trees had hushed to listen with him, he heard in the distance a thin, sweet strain of melody, the sound of pipes.

The sound ceased, borne elsewhere on some current of air, to return to him after some seconds at the will of the breeze. Without hesitating longer, he turned from the path and plunged into the cool undergrowth, forcing a path for himself through swaying shrubs.

The place whence the music came was hard to locate. It drew him this way and that, a will-o'-the-wisp of sound. Sometimes it ceased altogether, and once he could have sworn he heard in the distance laughter and girls' voices. Then the piping ceased altogether.

Hanniford came to a stop, leaning against a tree-trunk powdered with green blight, waiting for it to begin again, and waiting in vain. A sense of disappointment grew strong within him as the minutes passed. It was as if his coming had brought an end to the woodland revels. He was wondering whether to press forward or turn back, when sounds for which he had not been listening smote on his ears—sounds of brushed leaves and trodden twigs, light dancing footfalls, a girl's voice singing a snatch of song and dying away.



A moment later she burst upon his sight through a screen of leaves. And as she danced across the open space between two trees moonlight and shadow dappled her bare feet. Her white classical draperies shone through the dusk as if they diffused light of themselves. She saw him, for she swerved like a young foal; a little cry of astonishment changed to a mocking laugh; then she flung up her white arms and danced on. A great drooping bough bent before her and swung to again behind her, as if she had opened a door and closed it again in his face, but he saw through the foliage dancing gleams of vanishing white.

In a moment Hanniford had his breath and was after her in pursuit. She heard him, and fled dancing before him, looking back twice to laugh at him. Half skipping, half running, she reached a clearing where trees had been lately felled. Here the moon looked down and flung a sheet of light over an arc of the round open space. She sped on, leaping lightly over the low stumps of timber until she reached a little mound at the foot of a great elm. There she flung herself down panting, turned over, rested an elbow on the ground and laughed up at him, chin upon hand.

"I don't care!" she said. "I don't care!"

Hanniford had halted three or four paces away, a little more nervous than he cared to show, more than a little mystified by the look of mingled mirth and defiance in the eyes laughing up into his. Her hair was golden, but shone primrose pale in the light of the moon, and he now saw that her eyes were dark and deep, her nose small and straight and following the line of her brow, her chin firm and rather prominent, her mouth red and delicately curved, like a bow made for the rosy hands of Cupid.

"I don't care what you think," she said. "Why did you follow me?"

Hanniford found his voice. "Naturally I was curious," he said. "And, besides, you meant me to."

"Did I? I don't know. Who are you?"

He spread out his hands. "I am what you see—as surely a poor mortal as you are a spirit. Tell me, are you one of the cold, cruel handmaidens of Diana, and did you stand by and watch the slaying of Orion? Or are you a woodland nymph who dwells by day in the heart of a tree?"

"I am," she answered, "a highly respectable dryad."

He bowed. "I had guessed as much. And where are your sister-dryads?"

"Our dance is over for to-night. I left them to dance my own dance alone, to the music which is in my heart. The moonlight has got into my head to-night."

"Dear lady!" said Hanniford, looking up and addressing the moon.

"But who are you?" she asked. "Are you the mortal who pried on our revels last night?"

"Zeus forbid!" he answered gravely. "That mortal is somewhat indisposed in consequence."

"Poor dear!" she said, with a silvery laugh. "And you?"

"I am, of course, a young shepherd. I heard Pan playing in the wood, and ventured in. I shall never be the same man again, even if you protect me from the wrath of the Olympians. But if I've got to be turned into some horticultural specimen, I hope you'll use your influence to get me turned into something nice. I should hate, for instance, to be a monkey-puzzle, but I don't think I should make a bad sort of foxglove."

"I'll see what I can do for you," said the nymph. "But I'm rather unpopular with the gods and goddesses just now."

"Particularly with the goddesses," Hanniford suggested. "Aphrodite, of course, is jealous."

The nymph inclined her head. "That," she conceded, "is pretty good for a shepherd. Who taught you to say that?"

"My sheep," he answered.

"Your sheep?" she exclaimed.

"My sheep are my thoughts, Dryad."

"O-oh! You've been reading modern poetry."

"Hush! This is B.C. something, three thousand years ago. Do, for goodness' sake, remember that we are living in Greece. To-morrow is the feast of Phœbus Apollo, and I go to make my sacrifice before his temple in Athens. I'm going to give him an old billy-goat I haven't much use for."

The dryad giggled. "I like you, Shepherd," she said.

"I rejoice," he answered, "but isn't it dangerous to be liked by you?"

She grew grave for a moment. "It might be," she said.

"Well," said Hanniford, with a sigh, "I don't mind danger. That's the sort of shepherd I am."



"I was afraid you might be," she said, knitting her brows.

"It is not for you to be afraid, Dryad," he answered.

She sat up and flicked away some fine

"Give me the chance of ruining it properly. I hate scamping a job."

"How?" she asked.

"By letting me see you again, Dryad—at my own risk."

"In a moment Hanniford had his breath and was after her in pursuit"



dust of powdered wood which marred the whiteness of her draperies. "Shepherd," she said, "go in peace and never see me again."

"If I am never to see you again, how shall I go in peace, Dryad?"

She laughed and frowned together. "If I were a nymph and you a shepherd," she said, "you would rue to-night."

"If I were a starveling playwright and you a great lady, I might also rue to-night," he gave her back.

She said nothing, only the smile faded from her lips while the frown lingered.

"Well, let me rue to-night," he continued.

She shook her head gently. "Shepherd," she said, "your flocks are straying."

"Does that matter, Dryad, if their bells tinkle pleasantly?"

She laughed at that. "They tinkle delightfully. I have half a mind——"

"Yes?"

"To be here to-morrow night."



"Here in this spot? That is a promise, Dryad."

"No, not a promise," she said, laughing and stretching out her hand. "Give you good night, Shepherd." Suddenly she with-

He saw that she wished him gone, and went, first wishing her cool dreams through-out the morrow's daylight.

Back in the cottage, the sleepy voice of Weston challenged him from his



"She heard him, and fled dancing before him, looking back twice to laugh at him."

drew the hand. "No, no, you must not touch me, for you are mortal."

bedroom: "Hullo, Hanny! Did you see 'em?"



Weston, being Weston, could not be told. Hanniford shouted a negative and reviled him good-humouredly.

"Oh, all right," said Weston, turning over sleepily. "But you might as well be civil."

### III.

HANNIFORD found the same spot on the following night and waited there. In the distance he could hear the piping, but he kept his tryst without once departing from the place. He was sure in his heart that she would come, although she kept him waiting nearly an hour. At last he had a vision of her among the trees, white and ethereal as a moonbeam.

"What, you here, Shepherd?" she said, feigning surprise, as she ran lightly towards him across the clearing.

"I knew I should see you," he answered quietly.

"But I did not promise."

"That was how I was sure, Dryad. You are part woman, you know."

She laughed and frowned. "Are you going to be unkind to-night, Shepherd? If so, I shall leave you."

"That you cannot do, Dryad. To-day I wrote my name on your heart."

She gave him a quick glance, part surprised, part questioning.

"I found the tree," he explained, "which holds your spirit by day, and cut my name heart-high upon its bark."

She laughed at that. "O-oh, did you? And which is my tree, Shepherd?"

"It is a silver birch, of course—the most graceful and beautiful in the wood. So, whether you will or not, you will carry my name for ever, not only through the long summer days and nights, but throughout your long winter's sleep. Demeter shall read it, on her way to the cavern mouth to meet her daughter, as she stoops beside you to gather the first anemones. Persephone, coming once more to deck you in green, will smile the kindlier for what she reads. And—and there's a lot more, and it's all very beautiful, but I'm dashed if I can remember it for the moment."

"That's a pity," she said, smiling and seating herself on the stripped and prostrate trunk of an old tree, "because I should like to hear the rest. Perhaps if you smoked it would help you to remember."

"Smoke!" Hanniford ejaculated. "I hope I have too much respect for the—er—the unities."

"That's a pity," she remarked, "because

I should like to smoke, too, and I was hoping you would give me a cigarette."

"I never expected this," said Hanniford sadly, "from a real, genuine, hall-marked hamadryad. Well, well, I dare say I have much to learn and sorrow over. I suppose the pipes of Pan are briars. Likely enough, the satyrs smoke Woodbines, and strike vests on their cleft pads. Well, here are cigarettes, Dryad, but they're only gaspers."

She took a cigarette from the proffered leather case, and presently bent her garlanded head to light it from the match held out in the hollow of his hand.

"What are you when you're not a shepherd?" she asked presently.

"I know a better one than that," Hanniford replied. "Which would you rather, or go fishing?"

"Seriously," she urged.

"Seriously, I told you last night. 'If I were a starveling playwright, and you a great lady——'"

"Why starveling?"

"Because nobody produces my plays."

"Then why write them?"

"Because idleness is an ill thing, and because I have enough to live on in idleness. Three radishes and a glass of water a day are all I need. And what are you when you are not a dryad?"

"Didn't you say I was a great lady?"

"Undoubtedly. There are many great ladies. After all, what does it matter which one you may be? It were the same if you were a nymph and I a shepherd. Better, perhaps. The old gods were sometimes kinder than the living mortals of to-day."

She frowned and watched a wreath of smoke from her cigarette melt on the dusk. "I don't understand," she said. "You have gone too deep for me."

"They might have given me my immortality," he explained, "or made you mortal. So gulfs were crossed and barriers levelled. But the old gods are either dead or grown indifferent in their Twilight Lands."

"I see. And if I were a nymph and you a shepherd——"

"I would brave all the wrath of Olympus for you, lady. If Apollo himself, with the golden hair and the golden harp, came seeking you, I would dare to stand between you and him, and shout my cause for Zeus himself to hear. . . . you were quite right in asking me to smoke. I'm remembering a lot more things I thought of saying."

She laughed thoughtfully. "But as it is——"



"Oh, as it is, believe me, if I am an adventurer, I am not one in the modern meaning of the word. I hold up my head among all men, bow to all women, and kneel only to God and the King. But I mix only with my peers. The heavy money-bags, the broad acres, and the folk attached to them are beyond my scheme of existence. I have my pride, *moi* ! But one thing you may trust me to remember—that I came here at my own risk."

She was frowning deeply now.

"Good night—Playwright," she said.

"That sounded like 'Good night, Bourgeois.' Good night, Dryad. I like you better as a dryad."

"I prefer you as a shepherd," she said.

He bowed and left her. He had not gone a dozen paces when she called him Shepherd and brought him to face her once more.

"If I were a nymph," she said, "and you a shepherd, you would brave destruction for my sake?"

"For a lady of some considerable mental attainments," he replied, "you are astonishingly fond of repetition."

"And if I were the daughter of, say, a ninth baronet, a man with money and lands, you would not think of me again?"

"At least," said Hanniford, "I should not trouble you with my thoughts."

"I have only one thing more to say. When I have said it, will you swear not to follow me?"

He nodded.

"Suppose I were nothing more than a poor actress, a girl of no particular family and, Heaven knows, only too little money? Suppose I were just a dancing girl, hired with a bunch of others to dance in the moonlight to please the whim of wealthy people who are planning a pastoral play to be enacted in their woods under the moon? Suppose——"

He uttered a cry and took one step forward before he remembered his promise and she reminded him of it.

"Good night, Shepherd!" she called, and spun round upon her heels.

"Dryad! Dryad! Come here!"

"No, no!" came back the answer. She was running before him now, a flying white flame.

"To-morrow night!" Hanniford shouted.

Faintly a voice like Echo's answered him: "At your own risk."

## IV.

He was first there by only a few minutes on the following night.

"I mustn't stay," she said. "The others wonder where I go. Besides, it delays the proceedings and annoys Miss Falborne."

"Is she Sir Gerald's daughter?"

"She is, and she lets you know it, too. She's stage-manageress and everything else."

He was too hungry for details to begin playing Shepherd yet.

"Was it true—what you told me last night?" he demanded.

"Of course. Do you doubt me?"

"I've got to."

"Why?"

"Because I daren't believe it. Don't you see the difference it makes to me, you wild thing?"

"The play's coming off in a week's time. I like the job. It's better than a revue, and theatres are so stuffy this time of the year."

"Don't!" he groaned. "You aren't cut out for that kind of thing."

"Aren't I?" She laughed mockingly.

"I've heard managers say the same, only *they* meant to be rude. Fancy mistaking me for Miss Falborne! I wish I were."

"I'm glad you're not."

"Oh, she's not bad-looking? Haven't you seen her?"

"Never mind Miss Falborne. Come here."

She laughed mockingly, her head slightly aslant. "Why?" she asked.

"Because I want to tell you something."

"What?" she asked, without stirring.

"I love you," said Hanniford. "I want to marry you."

The words were plain enough and banal enough, but they sounded sweeter than the notes of nightingales in the ears of her who heard them. But she tried to laugh.

"If I were a nymph," she said, "I might have had you changed into a nasty scrubby shrub for that."

But Hanniford was in reach of her now and drew her into his arms. "Kiss me, Dryad," he said, "and you will change into a woman."

\* \* \* \* \*

The dancers who were being accommodated at Dorchland Place were, it seemed, permitted to receive visitors. Acting on instructions, Hanniford presented himself there on the following day at half-past eleven and asked to see Miss Vilmar—"my professional name, my dear."

The butler who received him was a little



puzzled, not having heard of a Miss Vilmar until Miss Margaret Falborne had informed him that a gentleman would call and inquire for such a person. Still, it was feasible that one of these dancing ladies might have more than one name. It was no business of his, and, moreover, he had his instructions.

So, as he took Hanniford's hat and stick, he said : " Yes, sir, but Miss Margaret wishes to see you first."

" Miss Margaret ? "

" Miss Falborne, sir. Will you step this way ? "

Hanniford was puzzled. He had never, to his knowledge, beheld the lady, nor could he guess what she might require of him. It was not until he was half-way across the wide hall in the wake of the butler that it occurred to him that this daughter of the house might have heard of his visits to the

wood, and be about to remonstrate with him both for trespass and for detaining one of her company during rehearsal. Hanniford smiled to himself, being quite indifferent. Let her say what she liked. It was not she whom he had come to see.

The man threw open the door of a morning-room and announced : " Mr. Hanniford ! " A girl rose from a settee and advanced towards him, smiling, half mischievous, half nervous. He stared at her dazedly for a long moment, while the door closed behind him.

" Miss—Miss Falborne ! " he stammered.

But next moment she was in his arms and laughing up at him. " Shepherd, dear," she said, " don't look like that. What does it matter what name I happen to wear ? Last night you kissed me and changed me into a woman."



## BIRD AND FLOWER.

**I** HEARD a lark that made the morning sweet,  
Far sped to nigh the sun with wing-beat strong,  
Above red poppies blazing in the wheat.  
O bird, O flowers, O harmony complete !  
Song in the air, and co'our like a song.

Strange fellowship of Nature ! I had snared  
On that wold's height a memory to keep  
Of sleep-flowers and an ever-chanting bird—  
Poppies by Lethe known, a lark's song heard—  
The lord of waking and the lords of sleep.

ERIC CHILMAN.



# MR. VICK STEPS IN

By K. R. G. BROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILMOT LUNT

THE latch of the long French window clicked back and Mr. Henry Vick stepped silently into the room. For a space he stood motionless, listening; then, carefully relatching the window and drawing the heavy curtains together behind him, he took from his pocket an electric torch and sent its thin finger of light sweeping and dipping over his surroundings. This preliminary reconnaissance proving satisfactory, he moved cat-like across the room to the door, listened again, nodded in a gratified manner, felt for the electric switch, and snapped on the light. Advancing to the table, he laid his extinguished torch thereon and looked about him with the contented expression of one who finds himself favoured by circumstances.

A gentleman of noticeably distinguished appearance, this Mr. Vick. The noble brow, the aristocratic nose, the mild, yet keen, blue eye, the neat and sober garments combined to lend him an outward aspect of the most profound respectability. At various times in his singularly ill-spent life he had been mistaken for a Wesleyan minister, a successful bookseller, and a retired butler—pardonable errors which afforded him much quiet entertainment. In point of fact, he was none of these things.

Mr. Vick was a resolute upholder of the doctrine of self-help. To such an extent had he suffered for his beliefs that fully a third of his fifty-two years had been spent in one prison or another, while there was every likelihood that a considerable portion of the remainder of his allotted span would be passed under similar conditions. Mr. Vick, however, was not addicted to brooding on the past or worrying over the future; it was enough for him that at the moment he was free to follow his nefarious inclinations, and that he had achieved entry to this house in a neat and workmanlike manner. Ten

minutes' labour, he calculated, as he removed his overcoat—an overcoat equipped with pockets of a size and shape unknown in fashionable tailoring circles—should suffice to send him on his way again as unobtrusively as he had come.

The room honoured by Mr. Vick's presence was half study, half sitting-room. Its furniture comprised a large, flat desk, two huge armchairs and a small table; in a corner by the window stood a small safe of an antiquated pattern, while facing it across the room was a tall cabinet, behind whose glass door were visible row upon row of seventeenth and eighteenth-century snuff-boxes of every size, material, and design. Upon these the mild blue eye of Mr. Vick now rested with an affectionate admiration.

"Ho," murmured Mr. Vick—like most men who live alone, he had a habit of talking to himself, an idiosyncrasy which had twice led to his arrest, but which he was powerless to eradicate—"so *there* you are, my beauties! There's a fine market for such as you for a man who knows where to look for it."

He spread out his overcoat, lining upward, upon the table, so that its remarkable pockets seemed to gape hungrily up at him. From some remote hiding-place about his person he disinterred a small implement of peculiar shape; with this he approached the cabinet and set to work expertly upon the lock of the glass door.

This proved more obdurate than he had anticipated, and Mr. Vick, reluctant to cause unnecessary noise or avoidable damage by breaking the glass—for at heart he was a kindly man—was compelled to concentrate his whole attention upon the task in hand. Thus the gentle opening of the door passed quite unheard by him, and it was not until the lock at last yielded to treatment, and the front of the cabinet



swung open, that he became aware that he was no longer alone.

His first intimation that he possessed an audience took the form of a voice—a quiet, well-bred voice that, impinging upon Mr. Vick's ear-drum at a range of about a yard and a half, caused him to start with extraordinary violence.

"Making yourself at home?" said the voice. "That's right."

Mr. Vick, genuinely taken aback for about the second time in his chequered career, spun about, staring. By the table stood a young man in a dinner-jacket—a tall, dark, broad-shouldered young man, whose white teeth were displayed in a discomfiting smile and whose right hand held a small but perfectly serviceable automatic pistol.

"You take snuff, I see," said this person smoothly. "Or do you only take snuff-boxes?"

With no apparent effort Mr. Vick regained his normal poise. He was much too experienced a hand to be more than temporarily disconcerted by this interruption, and it was a point of honour with him to "go quietly" on such occasions as offered no alternative. For a brief instant he toyed with the temptation to make a dash for it, but a second glance at the evil thing in the young man's hand checked the rash impulse. Mr. Vick shrugged his shoulders and presented a perfectly expressionless countenance to his captor.

"Well," said he calmly, "seems like my luck's out. I understood there was nobody in the house, only the servants."

"That was so—yesterday," said the young man gravely. "You've come a day too late, my friend. And now, I think, with your permission, we'll ring for a policeman."

"Just as you like," said Mr. Vick resignedly. "I know when I'm done."

The young man, never lifting his gaze from his prisoner's face, began to back towards the bell-push beside the fireplace. But he had taken no more than two steps when he started slightly and halted; a new expression crept into his eyes as he stared at Mr. Vick.

"Can you open a safe?" he asked suddenly.

Mr. Vick surveyed him suspiciously. A fair cop was a fair cop, but this probing into his professional accomplishments was quite unjustifiable.

"What's that to you?" he retorted. "You ring that bell and get it over, see?"

"I've got a reason for asking, and you

won't hurt yourself by answering. It's just struck me that you may be useful. If you can help me, you can go free. Can you open a safe?"

Mr. Vick devoted a moment to reflection. Experience had taught him the folly of boasting of his qualifications, but experience had taught him also the advisability of neglecting no chances, however slender.

"Well, there's safes *and* safes," he replied cautiously. "I don't touch that line of work nowadays, being oldish, but I don't mind telling *you* there was a time when I could open pretty well any tin can in the country with a hairpin in five minutes. Mind you," he added quickly, "that's between ourselves, see?"

The young man, without shifting his glance, pointed to the safe in the corner.

"Could you open that?"

Mr. Vick ran a scornful eye over the object indicated.

"An Everlock, and an early one at that. Bet you a couple of quid I'd have it open without tools before you could count thirty."

"Do it, then."

"Eh?" said Mr. Vick, taken aback.

"Open it. If you can, I'll let you go. If you can't, I'll ring this bell."

"What's the big idea?" queried Mr. Vick, puzzled. "Why get *me* to open *your* safe?"

"Because I've lost the combination," said the young man crisply, "and I want something out of it in a hurry. Get on with it, or I'll ring the bell."

Gravely Mr. Vick considered him for an instant; then he nodded.

"Right-o!" said he.

Beneath the unwavering regard of his captor, he crossed the room, sank to his knees before the safe, grasped the knob and pressed his ear against the door. There ensued a period of absolute silence, save for the faint click of the tumblers under Mr. Vick's skilful manipulation. Presently there sounded a louder click; Mr. Vick twisted the knob sharply and the safe-door swung open.

"There you are!" said Mr. Vick, with a faint note of pride. "What did I say? There aren't many——"

"Stand away," ordered the young man curtly. The muzzle of the automatic motioned Mr. Vick to the middle of the room; the weapon's owner, still with one eye upon his prisoner, approached the safe in his turn and bent over it for a moment. Then he straightened his back and smiled.



"Thanks," he said. "Now you can get—"

At this point occurred an interruption. From somewhere close at hand a voice arose, loud and peremptory, causing Mr. Vick, for

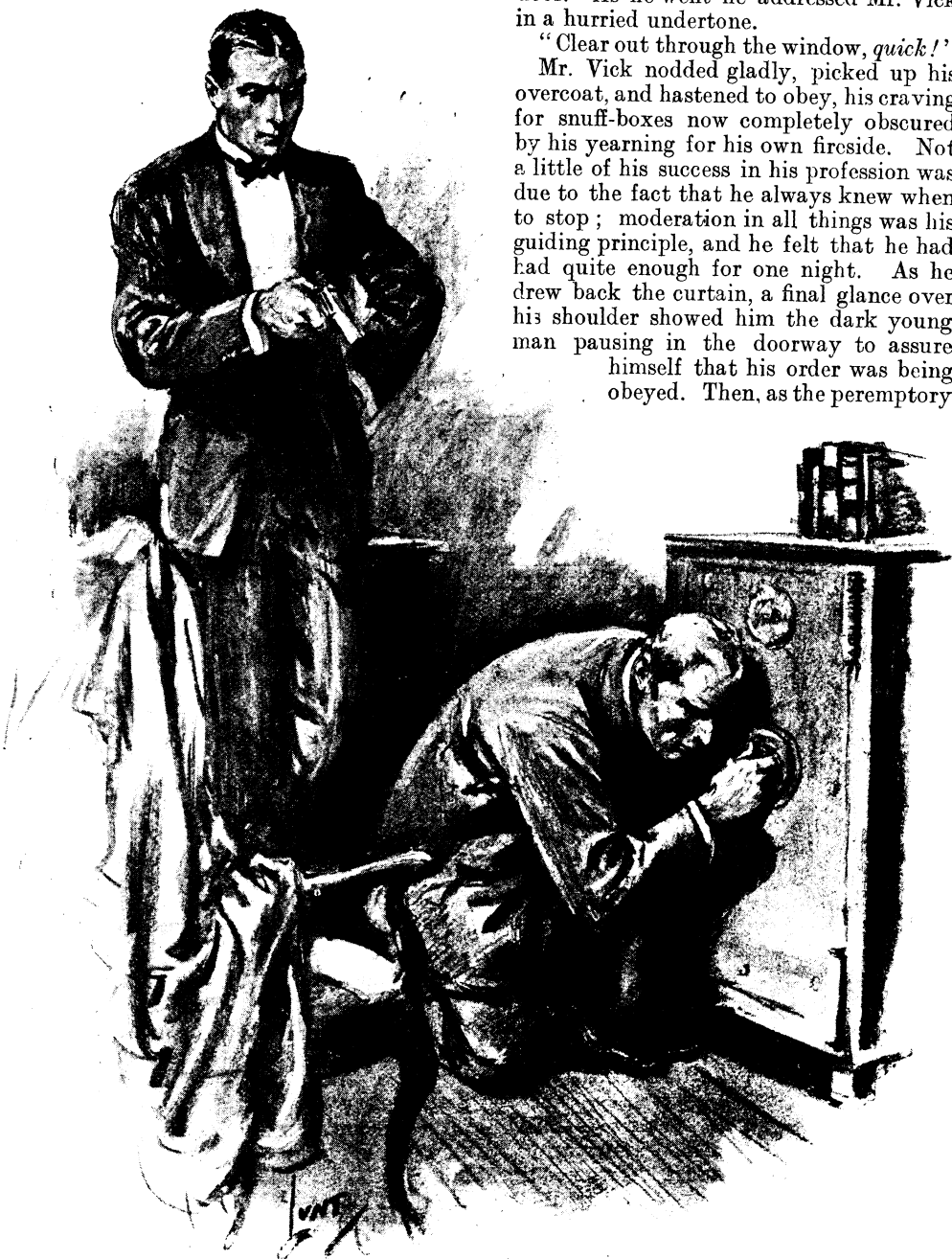
the second time that evening, to start as if stung by a wasp.

"Marshall! Where are you, Marshall?"

The young man muttered something under his breath and began to move towards the door. As he went he addressed Mr. Vick in a hurried undertone.

"Clear out through the window, *quick!*"

Mr. Vick nodded gladly, picked up his overcoat, and hastened to obey, his craving for snuff-boxes now completely obscured by his yearning for his own fireside. Not a little of his success in his profession was due to the fact that he always knew when to stop; moderation in all things was his guiding principle, and he felt that he had had quite enough for one night. As he drew back the curtain, a final glance over his shoulder showed him the dark young man pausing in the doorway to assure himself that his order was being obeyed. Then, as the peremptory



"There ensued a period of absolute silence, save for the faint click of the tumblers under Mr. Vick's skilful manipulation."



voice sent forth its summons again, Mr. Vick's late captor turned and was gone, switching off the light as he passed out. Mr. Vick emitted a sigh of relief and laid a hand upon the latch of the window.

Some eminent but anonymous thinker has laid it down that the unexpected invariably occurs. While there are doubtless flaws in this somewhat uncomfortable theory, it cannot be denied that the unexpected happened now. Mr. Vick, seizing the window-latch, found it immovable. He tried again, with a like result. His sense of touch informed him that his mode of entry earlier in the evening had so wrought upon the mechanism that it was now irreparably jammed; once closed—and Mr. Vick now bitterly regretted the excess of caution that had led him to relatch the window after his entrance—nothing short of dynamite could persuade it to open again.

Mr. Vick, after a series of futile manœuvres productive of nothing but a split thumb-nail, paused to consider this unfortunate development. His first impulse was to kick the window out and risk the consequences; his second to seek out the dark young man and explain his dilemma. Both these courses, however, were fraught with peril (what guarantee had he, for example, that the dark young man would not change his mind?), and for quite two minutes he remained irresolute, unable to make a decision. Indeed, it is probable that he would have continued to brood over his problem for an indefinite period if the sound of approaching footsteps and a murmur of voices had not roused him summarily from his absorption.

"Oh, hell!" muttered Mr. Vick peevishly, and withdrew behind the window curtain with all haste.

"Go into the study, Jimmy," said someone. "I'll come as soon as I've been in to Daddy."

The discomfited Mr. Vick, peering uneasily through a gap in the curtains, heard the door open, saw the light flash on and a young man enter the room—a fair-haired, thick-set, powerful-looking young man in evening dress, upon whose square-jawed visage sat an expression of harassed melancholy. This person, leaning against the table, began to drum his fingers moodily thereon, the while he stared abstractedly at the carpet.

Mr. Vick, gazing from his sanctuary, cursed beneath his breath. Manifestly he must remain in hiding until the room

emptied again, for though his late captor's promise might conceivably influence the other members of the household, it was more probable that it would not. That square-jawed youth, for instance, had the air of one who would give anything for a burglar upon whom to work off a little of his obvious ill-humour. Mr. Vick resigned himself to the necessity of biting the bullet and waiting upon events.

Minutes passed. The square-jawed young man glowered at the floor; Mr. Vick, dreading cramp, moved cautiously behind the curtains. Then the door opened and a girl entered.

She was a tall girl of a quite unusual comeliness; even the heavy fur coat that she wore could not conceal the slim grace of her figure. Her red-gold hair glinted under the light as she faced the square-jawed young man and addressed him in a tone of mild reproof.

"Now, Jimmy, what's all this nonsense? I won't let you say things like that about Daddy! 'Suspect' you, indeed!"

"But he does, Joan," said the young man sombrely. "I'm sure of it. You see, there is a leakage, and we can't spot it. We only know that it must be from inside the office, which rules out everybody but your father and Marshall and me. Once or twice lately things have gone astray, and then there was that business of the Mulliner breech-block two months back. I don't think he's forgiven me for that."

"But it wasn't *your* fault!"

"Theoretically it was, old girl. I was in charge at the works when the plans were taken, and if I hadn't been able to show a perfect alibi I might have been in the soup. Ever since then I've sort of felt his eye on me. It's—it's a bit tough, Joan, from *your* father."

"Well," said Joan, blushing very slightly, "he doesn't know yet that I'm going to—to marry you, Jimmy. And you must make allowances for him, dear. He's been ill lately, and it's a dreadful responsibility for him, having to look after all these plans while the things are being made. I *wish* they wouldn't give him all these guns and torpedoes and things to make, Jimmy; it's a dog's life. Anyway," she added, "I don't see why he should suspect you any more than Mr. Marshall."

"I can't swear that he does," returned Jimmy. "But Marshall's been his secretary for two years, and I've only been with him five months." He broke off for an instant,



and then looked up sharply. "By the way, Joan, has that swine been annoying you again?"

"Of course not, silly. Not since you—spoke to him."

"That's good," said Jimmy grimly. "If I thought—hullo!"

Joan swung round and stared at the doorway.

"Daddy!" she cried. "Oh, you disobedient man! Go back to bed at once!"

The new arrival advanced into the room. He was a very tall, gaunt old gentleman, white-haired, fierce-eyed and upright; he was arrayed in a silk dressing-gown of a rich purple tint, gaily striped pyjamas, and carpet slippers. His glance travelled from the square-jawed youth to the girl and back to the youth again.

"Ha, Frith!" said the old gentleman. "Not gone yet, eh?"

Jimmy flushed and stood up. "I'm going now, Sir Charles," he answered evenly.

"Don't be rude, Daddy," said Joan, "and go back to bed this instant, unless you want another relapse!"

"All right," said her parent, "all right. In a minute. I want the plans of the Brett torpedo. I don't feel easy about leaving 'em in that tin-pot safe all night—after what's happened lately. I'll keep 'em under my pillow. Thank goodness, they go back to the Admiralty to-morrow!"

He strode stiffly across the room to the safe, knelt before it, twirled the knob, and pulled open the door. The next moment a loud cry from him brought Joan and Jimmy to his side at a bound.

"Daddy, what is it?"

"It's gone!" cried Sir Charles. "The plans—a long blue envelope! It's gone!"

"What—oh, *Daddy!* It can't be! Look again!"

The square-jawed young man said nothing, but dropped on one knee and began to sweep the contents of the safe forth upon the floor. As each handful of papers fluttered down, Sir Charles fell upon them and tossed them right and left in his frantic search. Presently he flung aside the last and climbed slowly to his feet.

"It's gone," he said again.

Behind the curtain Mr. Vick, the unsuspected spectator of this crisis, was cursing inaudibly but with immense fervour. It seemed to him that his last hope of achieving an unostentatious departure from the premises was now gone beyond recall. This latest misfortune augured an active

and sleepless night for the entire household; it augured also a sleepless night for Mr. Vick. Moreover, it looked as if his presence must now become known in a very short time, since search for the absent documents could not well fail to disclose the uninvited guest. What with one thing and another, reflected Mr. Vick morosely, the evening's outing had been an utter failure from start to finish. Vainly racking his brains for some plan of action, he applied a gloomy eye to the gap in the curtain, and as he did so a thought came to him—a thought that caused him to start perceptibly and frown in a puzzled manner. But events were now marching with a speed that demanded all his attention and forbade consideration of less urgent matters.

Sir Charles, emerging from a brief and gloomy reverie, lifted up his peremptory voice.

"Marshall! Marshall! Come here!"

Quick steps sounded along the passage and the dark young man came briskly into the room. His glance flickered from the papers on the floor to the anxious faces of Joan and Jimmy and thence to Sir Charles.

"You want me, sir? Nothing wrong, I hope?"

"Wrong?" echoed Sir Charles bitterly. "Oh, no, Marshall, nothing wrong! The Brett plans have gone, that's all!"

"Gone?" exclaimed Mr. Marshall, staring. "Great Scot! But how—I mean to say, sir, I saw you put them in the safe this morning directly we arrived. Are you sure—"

"Of course I'm sure!" snapped Sir Charles. "Don't be a fool, Marshall! I put 'em in the safe this morning; they're not there now. Who's been in this room to-day?"

"No one, so far as I know, sir. And, anyway, nobody could open the safe without the combination, and not a soul knows that except yourself—and Frith, of course."

There was a queer, strained little pause. Slowly Sir Charles turned and looked at the square-jawed young man.

"You know the combination, Frith?"

Jimmy looked back at him steadily.

"I *did* know it, sir. Don't you remember—you gave it to me last month when I came up from the works to get those old specifications you wanted. But I've forgotten it now."

The quiet voice of Mr. Marshall intervened. "I suppose you didn't notice anything



odd or disturbed about the room, Frith, when you were waiting for Miss Kennedy just now?"

"No," said Jimmy shortly, "I didn't."

Sir Charles glanced at him quickly.

"Were you in here while Joan was with me?"

"Yes, sir," said Jimmy.

Another pause, more strained even than the last.

"Frith," said Sir Charles slowly, "there are things about this that I don't like. You're the only person who knew how to——"

A cry from his daughter cut him short.

"Daddy! Do you know what you're saying? How can you be so *hateful*? How *dare* you think Jimmy had anything to do with it!" She moved swiftly to Jimmy's side and took his hand; with her head thrown back and her eyes blazing scorn at her parent, she presented a very charming picture of defiance.

Surprise showed upon Sir Charles's face; a faint frown appeared upon the brow of Mr. Marshall. For a space nobody spoke.

What, meanwhile, of Mr. Vick? Behind his curtain that gentleman was a prey to somewhat singular emotions. Interest in the drama unfolding before him had temporarily

returned to him more forcibly. He looked at Sir Charles, surprised but obviously otherwise unmoved; at Jimmy, rather pale and very still; at Joan, the embodiment of angry scorn; at Mr. Marshall, discreetly interested in the background. An irresistible impulse, of which he was ever afterwards inordinately proud, mastered the unsuspected watcher. He drew back the curtain and stepped forth into the room.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Vick.

The effect of this simple observation was remarkable. With one accord the company whirled to stare at him. The faces of three of those present expressed nothing but complete



"One and a half seconds later Jimmy hurtled through the air like a projectile and bore Mr. Marshall to the ground by sheer force of impact."

banished fear of discovery. The thought that had occurred to him some moments ago

stupefaction; the face of the fourth revealed quite another sentiment. Mr.



Marshall uttered an exclamation and took a step forward, his mouth slightly open and his eyes narrowed. Mr. Vick, with

blue envelope, I can tell you where you'll find it." He jerked a thumb sideways at Mr. Marshall. "In his inside pocket."



"For perhaps three minutes the battle raged at high pressure, while Joan and her father, slightly stunned by the suddenness of the outbreak, hovered anxiously upon the outskirts."

an admirable assumption of nonchalance, addressed himself to Sir Charles.

"If," said he, "you're looking for a long

From the species of paralysis that seemed to have descended upon the meeting, Mr. Marshall was the first to recover.



He turned to Sir Charles with a faint smile.

"I don't know who this person is, sir, or how he got in, but it looks as if——"

Sir Charles motioned him abruptly to silence.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded of Mr. Vick. "And what are you talking about? How did you——"

"Never you mind who I am," responded Mr. Vick amiably. "I'm talking about what I *know*. That envelope's in his pocket. I saw him put it there after I opened the safe for him."

As if the magnitude of Mr. Vick's announcement outweighed the peculiar circumstances of its delivery, the centre of interest shifted to Mr. Marshall. That gentleman exhibited a commendable aplomb under the united scrutiny of three pairs of eyes. He shrugged his shoulders and achieved another smile.

"Really, sir," he began, "I don't think I need——"

"Oh, you dirty dog!" said Mr. Vick, and looked earnestly at Sir Charles. "I was meaning to stay hid till you'd all cleared out, but fair's fair, when all's said and done. Never you mind *how* I got in or *why* I got in. I did get in, and *he* came on me sudden and made me open that safe for him, which is a thing I could do any day with my hands tied. I dare say I've done myself a bit of no good by popping out like this, but I like the looks of them youngsters, and—and—well, fair's fair. You look in his inside pocket."

Sir Charles passed a dazed hand over his brow.

"This is beyond me," he said vaguely. "Even if—and, anyway, Marshall's been with me all the evening, so——"

"Not all the evening he hasn't," corrected Mr. Vick. "What about that time you were shouting for him?"

Sir Charles started.

"Ah, that's so! I'd forgotten. Marshall, what——"

"I'd look out, if I was you," advised Mr. Vick. "He's got a gun."

Indeed, Mr. Marshall's right hand was even now sliding gently backward to his hip-pocket. As Mr. Vick spoke, it com-

pleted its journey very suddenly and flashed out again. But before he could make effective use of his weapon, the square-jawed young man acted with precision and dispatch. His foot shot out, catching Mr. Marshall shrewdly upon the wrist and sending the automatic flying to a corner of the room. One and a half seconds later Jimmy hurtled through the air like a projectile and bore Mr. Marshall to the ground by sheer force of impact.

Thereafter things happened fast and confusedly. Mr. Marshall displayed a noteworthy courage and agility, but he was no match for the infuriated Jimmy, whom a pardonable sense of grievance converted into a kind of human tornado. For perhaps three minutes the battle raged at high pressure, while Joan and her father, slightly stunned by the suddenness of the outbreak, hovered anxiously upon the outskirts. At length Jimmy's stout right hand, connecting violently with the angle of Mr. Marshall's jaw, put a period to the hostilities. The victor rose to his feet, hoisted a limp and dishevelled Mr. Marshall to a chair, thrust a hand into the pocket indicated by Mr. Vick, and drew forth a long blue envelope. This, with an absolutely expressionless face, he handed to Sir Charles.

"Oh, Jimmy!" said Joan thankfully.

Sir Charles tore open the envelope, glanced within, nodded in a vastly relieved manner, and bestowed it carefully in the pocket of his dressing-gown. When he looked again at Jimmy it was with an air of shamed embarrassment that sat oddly upon him.

"I'm—sorry, Frith," was all he said; then he glanced at his daughter and smiled. "*Jimmy*, I mean."

"That's all right, sir," answered the square-jawed young man, and brazenly slid an arm about Joan's shoulders, a liberty which that young lady appeared to welcome rather than resent.

"And as for our mysterious friend," said Sir Charles, turning, "I think we're entitled to——"

He stopped, finding himself addressing vacancy. Taking advantage of the commotion and the open door, Mr. Vick had stepped out.







MY BUNGALOW.

# A SOUTH SEA ISLAND TRADER'S DAY

By CLIFFORD W. COLLINSON

"Come! Tell me how you live," I cried,  
And thumped him on the head.

THESE familiar lines of Lewis Carroll's constantly recurred to me during my last visit to the Old Country, in consequence of the keen interest and abysmal ignorance of those I met on the subject of how a South Sea Island trader actually makes his living.

When a copy of *THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE* came into my hands the other day—and you should see how eagerly we in the "Back o' Beyond" read every word, not only of the stories and articles, but of every advertisement as well—I was greatly interested in an article dealing with a South African trader's day.

It has occurred to me that your readers might be interested in a similar account of the business side of life in the Solomon Islands, far-famed for head-hunting, cannibalism, and the general ferocity of their inhabitants.

"Give a dog a bad name . . ." is a true saying, for the Solomons are still held up by sensational writers as almost the last refuge of vicious beachcombers and the scene of bestial savagery on the part of the natives.

It is true enough that we certainly have a few tame beachcombers—white men who have "gone native," and eke out a precarious existence on the vegetable food their native wives obtain for them.

It is also true that the bushmen of the interior of one or two of the larger islands composing the Group are still supposed to be addicted to cannibalism and other gross forms of gastronomy, but we white men, who live only on the coasts of the various islands, hardly ever encounter any trouble from the natives.

I am writing this on the verandah of my bungalow, overlooking the beautiful harbour of Simbo Island, a volcanic island lying thirty miles away across the open Pacific



from Gizo, which is itself a small island also, and one of the three main ports of call of the one and only steamer which shuffles to and fro between Sydney and the Solomons at intervals of seven weeks. Our connection with the outer world, therefore, is somewhat meagre, and the scare-headings of the belated English newspapers that reach us seem particularly futile when one remembers that all the thrills connected with this sensation and that were all over and forgotten long before we read about them, and the world probably not one whit affected one way or the other in the long run.

I have only recently returned to the

into heaps, husked, split open, the white "meat" extracted and "cooked" for twenty-four hours over a smoky fire, and then bagged as copra. About fifteen bags of copra go to the ton, roughly representing between 7,500 and 8,000 coconuts.

In addition to my plantation copra, however, I purchase a considerable amount from the natives in exchange for trade goods. In order to deal with this native copra, therefore, I run a store—"sit-ore," in pidgin-English—and the stock is a varied one indeed.

Amongst other things it includes tobacco (strong twist in sticks, of which about twenty-six go to the pound), matches, clay



NATIVE GIRLS ARRIVING TO PURCHASE CALICOES AND BEADS.

Islands from a visit to England, and I can still see those serried ranks of business men, glumly silent, buried in their morning papers, under the glow of the electrics as the Tube roars and swerves through its subterranean tunnels. I used just to sit and watch them, and wonder how on earth they could stick it.

And that brings me to my subject—how we live and what we do out here in the South Sea Islands.

I have here on my island of Simbo (my nearest white neighbour is thirty miles away) a coconut plantation and a trading station. The coconuts, as they fall ripe from the palms, are periodically gathered

and wood pipes, needles, jews' harps, soap (scented as well as bar), kerosene, hair-oil, reels of cotton, knives of all sorts, from the small pocket-knife to the matchet with a sixteen-inch blade, files, lamps, razors, beads, tinned meats, tinned sardines, burning-glasses, singlets, fish-hooks and fish-lines, biscuits, belts, fish-spears, axes and axe-handles, talcum powder, and, finally, calicoes and printed cottons of various designs and qualities, from plain white cottons up to silk cashmeres.

These calicoes we sell in 1-fathom lengths, and they are used by the natives, men and women alike, as *lava-lavas*—



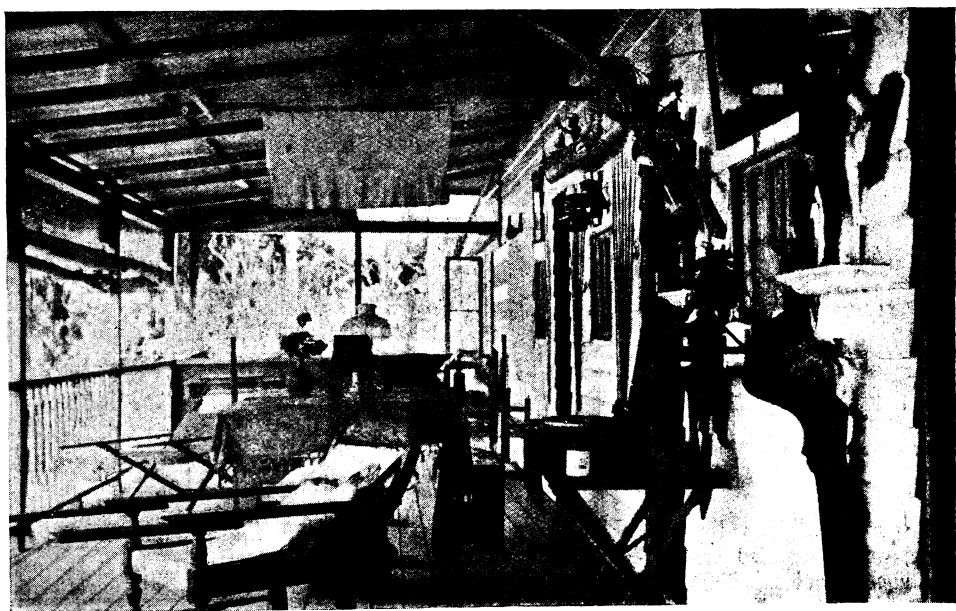
short skirts—and constitute their one and only garment. On Sundays those who have come under the mission influence don singlets or thin cotton dresses respectively, and look correspondingly ridiculous. However, it is all good for trade.

\* \* \* \* \*

At a quarter to six every morning I awaken like clockwork, not *by* clockwork, but by habit. At four minutes to six the sun rises punctually over the horizon, and four minutes later the little black house-boy "makes him bell-o"—that is to say, he blows a long penetrating note on a perforated conch-shell, which gives the signal for the

the day—some boys to the plantation, one to paint a dinghy, maybe, one to tidy up the garden, a few to cut and bag native copra, perhaps—a general arrangement of the daily work.

This accomplished, I repair to the bathroom, have a shower and a shave, and then get dressed. Dressing is a simple proposition here, with the nearest white woman thirty miles away. No agonised indecision as to which tie and pair of socks to wear, no groping under dressing-tables for elusive collar-studs—merely stockings and white shoes, a pair of "shorts," and a tennis shirt open wide at the neck.



THE VERANDAH OF MY BUNGALOW.

"labour" to commence the work of the day.

I have neither the space nor the ability to attempt to describe the glories of an Island sunrise; even the wonderful word-paintings of a Stacpoole or a Grimshaw fall far short of the radiant reality.

My house-boy brings me a glass of lemon water and a sliced mummy-apple, or maybe a pineapple, and these I absorb on the verandah in the level rays of the newly-risen sun, whilst the labour-boys pass in single file beyond the lawn, by the path which leads to the copra sheds close to the little wharf. The head boy presents himself on the garden path below the verandah, and I lean over and allocate the tasks for

By this time breakfast is ready on the verandah table, and whilst I am having it I see black-skinned natives crossing the end of the garden, carrying strings of copra, slung on bamboo poles over their shoulders, down to the copra sheds. Most of the natives own coconut palms, the number varying, with their wealth, from a grove down to a few poor trees.

A "string" of copra consists of twenty half-coconuts (the white "meat" duly extracted from the shell and "cooked") strung on a piece of rattan, and ten of these strings count as one hundred coconuts.

I now light my pipe—ah, that first after-breakfast smoke!—and, descending from my bungalow the long flight of steps that



leads to the beach path, walk along the shore of the harbour, its blue waters sparkling and the white breakers on the reef at the entrance flashing and thundering under the morning sunlight, to the store, where I find a mixed crowd of natives and a miscellaneous collection of tropical produce awaiting me.



A SIMBO MAN WEARING NATIVE ORNAMENTS OF MUCH VALUE.

The copra strings lie in golden-brown heaps, and here also is a pile of trochas pearl-shell—conical shells with green-and-red markings, which ultimately are made into shirt buttons. If you look at the back of almost any shirt or pyjama button, you will see the red-and-green marking of the original shell.

Here, too, are a few green-snail shell, much larger than the trochas and of a different shape altogether, which also yield mother-o'-pearl.

A "boy" may have brought me a bundle of turtle-shell (tortoise-shell), though this is a comparatively rare occurrence, owing to the scarcity of these creatures.

Having inspected the various commodities, being careful to see that there are twenty copra on each string, and not eighteen or sixteen—as alas! these wily natives sometimes try to impose on one—and that there are no brown stains in the snail-shell, nor "baby" nor "dead" shells amongst the

trochas, I open the store, retire behind the counter and prepare to do business with the natives, who throng in behind me out of the glaring sunlight.

Now as to the method of procedure. Let us suppose that one Gorataru has brought in three hundred copra. The conversation is something like this :—

MYSELF: "Who belong this three hundred coppa (copra)?"

GORATARU: "He belong me."

MYSELF: "What name you want him along him?"

GORATARU: "Calico along one hundred." (I hand him a fathom of the particular cotton print he selects.)

MYSELF: "All right! One hundred along calico—two hundred he stop (remains). What name you want him along this feller two hundred?"

GORATARU: "Tambak (tobacco) along fifty." (I hand him three sticks.)



A SIMBO MAID.

MYSELF: "One hundred and fifty he stop."

GORATARU: "Fiss-hook." (He consults the display card, where about ten different sizes are shown, and makes his choice.) "Fifty coppa along this feller." (I count out a shilling's worth.)

MYSELF: "One hundred he stop."



GORATARU: "Matchisi (matches)." (I hand him two packets.)

MYSELF: "Baito—finish." (Credit exhausted.)

Of course, business is by no means so quickly accomplished as the above condensed version might lead one to suppose. Time is of no account to a native, and there are long intervals between question and answer, in which one simply leans patiently on the counter, gazing out through the open door over the sparkling water, towards the cool green shade of the palms across the harbour, whilst the boy sniffs and fidgets and scratches himself and jabbars to his friends or consults his *mary* (wife) about the respective merits of the goods displayed.

In between - whiles a worthy but practically naked client will plunk a shilling down on the counter and say "Tambak" or "Matchisi," and I hand over the goods. It is a curious thing that in nine cases out of ten, if a native wants, say, three shillings' worth of tobacco, he will come to the counter three separate times to buy it—a shilling's worth at a time, with long intervals between.

More often than not the men bring their women-folk with them, and when it is a question of selecting a calico for their own wear, the bargain-hunters of London's West End could teach them nothing. They are as pernickety and aggravating as any of their white sisters, and their flow of language is just as copious and continuous. It is during the serving of these dusky belles that the poor trader has the longest spells of harbour-gazing.

But at 11 a.m. the "bell-o" sounds again, the labour knocks off, the store is closed, and I seek the peace and quiet of my bungalow

verandah. I have an early, and very light, lunch at 11.15, and then doze in my Singapore chair, with my horsehair fly-whisk mechanically waving to and fro, until 1 p.m., when again the long boom of the big conch-shell summons black and white once more to their tasks.



MY TWO COOK-BOYS AND A FRIEND.

During the noonday siesta I have seen two or three canoes from outlying villages round the coast come skimming into the harbour with their freight of copra or pearl-shell, so that on my arrival at the store the same process is repeated. Trade slacks off at about 4 p.m., however, so I close up and go for a tramp of inspection



round the plantation, and as I near the house at 5 p.m. the long sweet sound of the "bell-o" floats for the last time over the harbour, the shadows deepening to purple under the westering sun, and the prospect of a shower and a change of clothes is distinctly welcome.

Even though one is alone on an island, one makes a point, as a matter of self-respect, of shaving every morning and changing into clean ducks every night. It is so very easy to get slack in the Islands, and so very hard to "get back" when once you have let go. A policy of "Oh, well, just this once I won't bother to!" is fatal.

Behold me, then, after my shower and change, stretched out in my long chair on the verandah, with the cheerful clatter of pots in the kitchen (which is separate from the house and connected by a gangway bridge), and a "sundowner" at my elbow. Below me lies the harbour, with my little auxiliary schooner and sailing cutters floating peacefully at anchor, whilst the palm trunks on the opposite shore glow redly in the level beams of the sinking sun. The tropic night falls swiftly, and one by one the great stars stab out in the blue dome above, as the cockatoos flutter and screech amongst the trees and the cicadas shrill their thin, monotonous call.

A simple little dinner is followed by a pipe as I lie and think over the happenings of the day, and plan the work for the morrow. My musings are interrupted by the entry of a self-conscious procession from the kitchen—cookie and the two small house-boys, each clad simply but smartly in extremely short and tight white *lava-lavas* with neat red waistbands.

Cookie clears his throat and says "Good night, master!" to which I reply "Good night, Siripondi!" Then the bigger of the two house-boys mutters something unintelligible, and I roar at him in pretended rage: "Speak up, my lad, speak up! Me no *kai-kai* (eat) you!" And so, taking his courage in both hands, he tries again and achieves a passable result. To him I also reply gravely "Good night, Sai!" But the littlest one of all, a cheeky little nine-year-old, profiting by his mate's experience, pipes out his "Good night, master!" in a shrill treble, and I have much ado to keep my face straight. However, I manage to give him a "Good night, Pitu!" in a sufficiently portentous manner, and then a sudden thought strikes me, and, as

they are turning away, I say ferociously: "Ha, Pitu, you make him bed belong me, and put him out every something belong night belong me, eh?" For the feather-headed little beggar forgot all about it last night.

Pitu squeaks out "Yassah!" and all three thereupon file off the verandah, and I can hear them skylarking along the moonlit path under the palms that leads to their sleeping quarters, a quarter of a mile away. And so I am left alone, to read and smoke and think, in the little oasis of light cast by the table lamp, whilst outside the fireflies are winking, and the low boom of the surf on the coral reef ebbs and flows as the night breeze whispers through the palms. And so to bed, as Pepys says.

A good proportion of trade copra is obtained by visiting the different villages along the coasts of adjacent islands in our launches. Indeed, half my time is spent afloat.

Every trader owns a vessel of some kind, fitted with a heavy duty oil engine of from 8 horse-power to 16 or 20 horse-power. My own boat is a 15-ton ketch-rigged schooner with a 16-horse-power Frisco Standard. In preparation for a trip, she is brought alongside the little wharf, and a complete assortment of trade goods is packed aboard on specially constructed shelves down below in her cabin. The cabin, as a matter of fact, is occupied entirely by the engine and the trade goods, life aboard being always spent on deck.

Every Island schooner is fitted with a "house"—an awning which is held out to the sides on a wooden framework and passes over the boom amidships. This serves to protect one from both rain and sun. On my own boat there is also a thwartship screen, which is erected when the vessel is at anchor, and makes her after-portion snug and private.

With trade goods, benzine, and food supplies all stowed aboard, we start her up and in the pearly dawn glide out of the harbour through the tricky S-shaped passage between the guardian reefs, the shoal-water a pale apple-green against the blue of the deeper water. We head for an island due north of us, blue in the distance, but, after two hours' steady chugging, revealing precipitous cliffs and high mountains inland covered with dense tropical foliage from summit to beach—a veritable cataract of vegetation.

Here and there, above the thick jungle,



floats a film of blue smoke, the sign of a native village or the cooking of copra, but otherwise there is no sign of life or habitation. As we sail slowly along the coast, however, there suddenly shoots out from the shore a little fleet of flimsy canoes, which bear down upon us, swimming like corks over the long Pacific rollers. I slow down the engine and finally stop her altogether, leaving the schooner to drift whilst the canoes slide alongside and their occupants clamber aboard. Sending my head boy below, I now display my newest goods on the cabin-top.

A trader new to the game would doubtless come to the conclusion that all his goods were useless, and so far as selling them is concerned, he might as well heave them overboard and go and buy something altogether different, because maybe for half an hour not a stroke of business is done. They only appear to glance casually and in a most contemptuous manner at each new production. Time to a native is a matter of no concern, and this is distinctly aggravating sometimes, especially when one is lying off a rocky lee shore, with a squall approaching from windward.

Ultimately, however, one native will choose a calico, and, like a flock of sheep, the others follow, and business is brisk for a time. Calicoes, knives, fish-hooks, soap, tobacco, matches—all these and many more goods are handed out in quick succession. Payment is made in shillings or in copra brought in the canoes, and in the case of men one knows and trusts, credit is sometimes given, one's sailing cutter calling later to pick up the copra.

Business being concluded, I call the engine-boy, start up, and again get under way, the natives tumbling overside into their leaky vessels, balancing their purchases on their knees to keep them out of the water. And so the day passes, until at sunset I make for a well-remembered and lonely inlet, where the mangroves, stilted on their snaky roots, crawl out far from the banks, and a tiny sandy beach provides the boys with a place on which to boil their kerosene tin of rice.

The light swiftly fades, and all is still save for the splash of leaping fish and the croaking of the big bull-frogs, whilst on the little strip of coral beach the firelight flickers red on the palm trunks, and the silhouetted figures of the boys pass to and fro before the flames.

As well as being storekeeper and purchaser of copra and shell, the trader and

planter in the Islands is called upon to act also as doctor and general adviser (unofficial) to the natives of the villages in his vicinity.

It is not often that a white man transgresses the law to such an extent that he is sentenced to gaol. If the offence is one against morals, he is usually told to clear out of the Group and never return. There have been cases, though, where a white man has been sentenced to a short period of incarceration in prison. The awkward part of it is that there is no prison in the Group reserved for white men, and it would be manifestly improper to lock them up with native murderers. It generally resolves itself into a white prisoner becoming an unpaid assistant in one of the Government offices at Tulagi, the capital of the Group.

There is a true story told of a certain white man under arrest, for whom no suitable prison could be found, with the result that he was ordered to serve his sentence on his own schooner in the harbour. He promptly claimed subsistence allowance, and was awarded half-a-crown per day—a pittance which, he bitterly complained, hardly kept him in drinks.

The Island of Simbo, on which I am situated, is a famous one amongst the natives of the Solomons, and a great many of their superstitions centre round it. This may be due to the fact that there are two extinct volcanoes here—one of them active in comparatively recent times—and that sulphur deposits, fumaroles, and hot springs are to be found in several places. In fact, in a certain narrow channel the sea-water is almost too hot to bear the hand in, and passing through it in a canoe is like being in a Turkish bath.

There is also a village on the shores of an extraordinary inland circular lagoon, four miles along the coast, where cooking can be done on almost red-hot rocks, and where portions of the beach are so hot that the pebbles charred the leather soles of my shoes. The water of the lagoon is of a peculiarly misty pea-green, and, though measuring more than a mile in circumference, the only entrance to it from the sea is through a hidden channel not more than three yards wide.

But, however this may be, the natives for many miles around believe that when they die their spirits come to Simbo, and whilst this belief does not appear to worry the Simbo natives themselves, it is very difficult



to persuade natives of adjacent islands to come here to work.

I have also a particularly malevolent devil-devil man (witch-doctor) here, who has lately been causing me trouble, and whom I am taking steps to scotch effectually. I have challenged him to a display of wizardry on my verandah in front of a representative gathering of chiefs. The display comes off one week after the arrival of the next steamer from Sydney, and I am counting on the arrival of a few mechanical illusions from a Sydney friend, which, I think, will entirely outwizard any black magic that my friend the devil-devil man can put up.

I am afraid this is more like a letter than a magazine article, and, indeed, it is difficult to know where and when to stop, because things that by familiarity appear commonplace to me seem to fascinate people who live elsewhere. Here is a case in point. I really hesitate to write it, because I am quite sure I shall be accused of exaggerating, whereas, as a matter of fact, it is the cold truth. As I wrote the first word of this very paragraph, the verandah shook suddenly, and I looked up, startled, to see who approached.

Nobody! Nothing! It was a baby earthquake. The volcano, clad from peak to base in the densest tropical vegetation, towers 1,500 feet sheer immediately behind the house, and almost overhangs it. The natives say that one day "earth he shake-a-shake big feller too much," and that the whole thing will topple over. On that day,

if my luck is in, I shall arrange to be away on a trading expedition.

Pidgin-English, the *lingua franca* of the Pacific Islands, is expressive and sometimes distinctly ingenious. A boy of mine once wanted a saw, and this is how he asked for it: "Master, me want him this feller pull-him-he-come, push-him-he-go, brother belong ackis (axe)."

And another boy, when asked what particular job of work he was engaged on, replied: "Oh, me boat's crew along schooner belong bullamacow!" By which he intended to convey that he was at present driving an ox-wagon.

And the painful stories of the misdirected efforts of amateur cook-boys are legion. One will suffice. One morning I told a new cook-boy, who assured me that he "savvied plenty along cook him something" to boil me two eggs for breakfast, and, in order that they should be correctly timed, I lent him my watch and told him that when the big feller (minute) hand reached the hour he was to remove the eggs from the boiling water.

Five minutes elapsed, and nothing happened. Eight minutes, and still nothing doing, so I stormed across the connecting gangway. I found the cook-boy gazing into the pan with a very worried expression on his black face. "Master," he wailed, "egg belong cockerako he no finish yet. Big feller hand he stop all the time along one feller place!" He had boiled the watch.

But, after all, it's a great life.



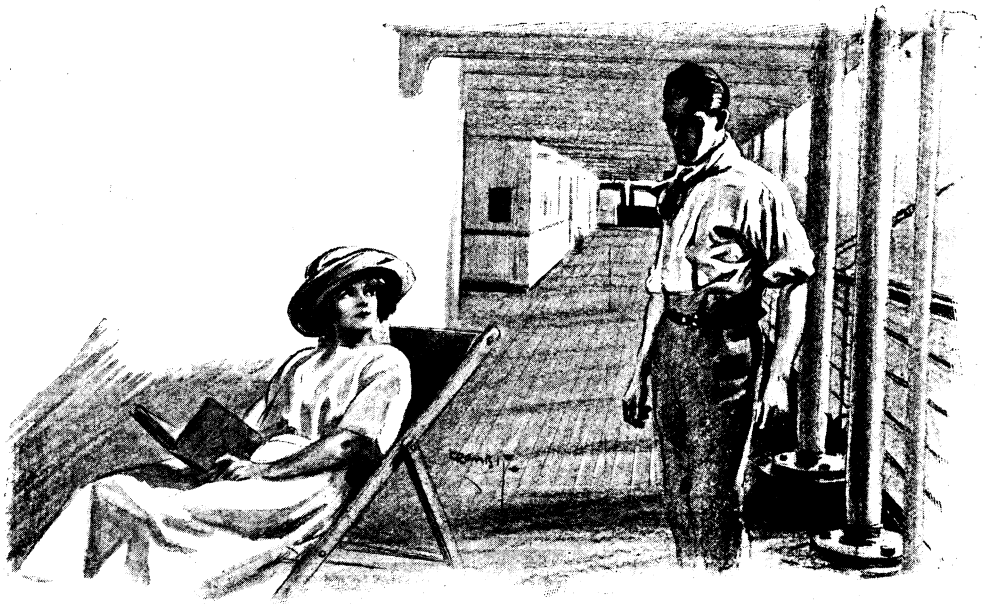
## WILD GEESE.

**T**HE wild white geese fly over  
With strange and eerie cry,  
And seem but dream-shapes ghostly  
Against a windy sky.

My thoughts go backward faring  
To long and long ago  
And all youth's dreams are phantoms  
That now I scarcely know.

GEORGE L. ANDREWS.





"She glanced up, as though he had called, though he had not spoken, and instant recognition and yet puzzlement came to her eyes."

# IMPULSE

By DOUGLAS NEWTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

THE best—in fact, the only way to explain the unexpected actions of Martin Seton is to put them down as they actually occurred.

On a day full of spring sun he went down to the docks. He had a *salon de luxe* booked on a quite resplendent liner, and he intended to travel in it to Montreal. He had made up his mind to go shooting in the wild Algoma country, and he hoped that hard days spent in that hard land would be less wearisome than the life he seemed doomed to live everywhere else.

He arrived early, since he had driven over from a friend's house in a motor. The boat train had not arrived, and his boat had the curious and depressing air of liners empty of passengers. He ran away from its gloom to walk the docks.

Nothing really interested him until he reached the basin in which a liner sailing for Ventisquero, the capital of Venaraguas, was getting ready for sea. Even that

attractive vessel did not thrill him at first, for sea voyages were old boredoms to him, and he had travelled on this ship's sisters.

She had received her cargo and her passengers, and was now only waiting for her mails. There was a bustling impatience about her. Friends standing on the quayside were showing the strain of the long-drawn-out parting. Martin stood and smiled a little cynically at the scene. He had savoured it so often.

It was just before he turned to continue his walk that he noticed the girl.

She was standing high up on the boat-deck alone. Martin saw by the fact that she had already got a deck chair, a shawl, and a book up there, that she was a traveller as seasoned as himself. But it was not that which drew him. There was something about her that seemed to touch him with the thrill of an electric shock.

He did not understand what this was—



her slimness, perhaps; her astonishing air of fluency and grace, perhaps; the definite, quiet wonder of her serene beauty, perhaps. Perhaps it was the fact that her steady, dark eyes for a moment held his as she looked down and he looked up. It may have been one or all of these things that gave him his curious shock. It may have been that sudden and overpowering sense of affinity which even in these days attacks and overwhelms mundane young men. He did not know, and, what is more, he did not question or analyse. He simply stared at her with a singular breathlessness, while something in his mind said powerfully and decisively: "There she is. You have got to know her."

The girl sat down quietly and began to read. Martin Seton stopped staring at her and walked straight to the single gang-plank remaining at the side of the liner. At that moment he did not know what he was going to do; but he did note that the mail cars had arrived, that the derricks were swinging in the canvas mail-bags at a hungry speed, and that he said to himself: "I must be quick. No time to waste."

A quartermaster at the top of the gang-plank tried to stop him boarding the ship.

"Can't come aboard now, sir," he said. "'All ashore' went half an hour ago. We're due to cast off any minute. No one allowed aboard." As he spoke, the determination in Martin's face seemed to overcome him, and he ended, "Not unless you are a passenger, sir."

"I am," said Martin Seton evenly.

A business-like man, who had been chatting with the purser near the gang-plank, stared quickly at Martin as the latter spoke. He came forward at once.

"But they're all aboard," he said. "What class, sir?"

Martin stared at him. When he travelled he naturally travelled saloon. He said just that one word.

The man frowned in a puzzled way. He had reason to—he was the company's passenger agent. He knew that the list of saloon passengers in his pocket had a tick to every name.

"What name?" he demanded, and out came his typewritten list. Martin Seton spoke his name. The frown deepened on the man's face. "But your name's not down," he said. "You're not travelling by this boat, sir."

"I haven't booked my room yet," said Martin. "I've just come to do it,"

He had not known that a moment ago. Now he was certain of it.

"For this trip?" cried the man, taken aback.

"Certainly."

"Can't be done, sir," said the agent. "Full up. Even the emergency cabins full up. This is our busiest season, you know."

"Second class, then," said Martin, in no way abashed.

"My dear sir," cried the agent, "the whole ship's full!"

"I've got to come," said Martin, with a doggedness which surprised himself.

"Really, sir, it's impossible. We're full."

"You must make room," said Martin. The idea that he could not travel out to Venaraguas with the girl on the boat-deck seemed to him to be unthinkable.

The purser butted in. On his face was the genial and all-knowing smile that came of years of dealing with those wayward sheep—ocean passengers.

"You don't want to go steerage, do you, sir?" he said persuasively. "That's the only way we can fit you in, sir."

Martin stared at him for a full minute. Interiorly he was telling himself he was an ass. His voice said to the purser, the agent, and the world at large: "I'll go steerage."

He went steerage.

The agent and the purser tried to persuade him he wouldn't like it at all, but they soon gave way before his obstinacy and the call of business elsewhere. They fixed everything up for him and washed their hands of him and left him. Martin found himself cut off from habitual luxury, without a change of clothes—for there had been no time to get his baggage—and with a garlic-tonged Italian and a Bermondsey gasfitter as companions.

They told him they were going to Venaraguas, where they expected to earn enormous sums of money. They were intensely and almost suspiciously surprised at learning that he did not know where he was going himself. The Bermondsey man went to great pains to explain to him that his ticket would take him right through to Ventisqueiro. Martin Seton said he supposed so, and wondered where the girl would get off. The Bermondsey man a little later offered the Italian the firm opinion that Martin was off his crumpet. It was either that or he had "hopped it" for good and possibly criminal reasons.

On the whole, the visible facts were on the side of Bermondsey. Martin was a



young man of considerable wealth, he belonged to an exclusive club, and had the habit of dining at exclusive restaurants—his big, clean, well-clothed figure indicated these things—yet here he was travelling steerage, and all for the sake of a girl he knew nothing whatever about, save that she was lovely and that she called to him in some strange, all-powerful fashion he could not understand. If he had thought of what he was doing, he might have wondered at his own sanity. He did not wonder, he just had to do it—one glimpse of a girl had caused all that. Certainly the opinion of Bermondsey was correct. Martin himself thought so many times. He wondered what the end of it all would be, and if the girl herself would think him worth a moment's attention if he ever did come to meet her. But somehow he felt certain she would. He felt sure she was in this strange happening, too, and that he and she could not escape from it, even if they wanted to. And he did not want to escape.

He spent his time, much to Bermondsey's disgust, staring up at the promenade-deck, hoping to see her. He expected her, somehow, to be drawn to that part of the deck which he watched by the power of this queer sympathy he felt between them. He was rather taken aback to find that she was not so drawn, and that he could stare for hours without seeing her. He did discover in time that the girl took a regular constitutional every morning before breakfast, and also another after dinner each evening.

He was always there to watch her. He sat on the steam winch waiting for her to come round the end of the deck, pass before him, and then pass away along the deck. She delighted him. It was not merely that she was beautiful and graceful, but she walked with such perfection. It seemed to him that her movements, like her serene and lovely features, spoke of the fineness of her spirit. She was always quietly and simply dressed, but never without distinction.

Martin, looking at her, knew why he had come. Looking at her, he knew he *had* to come. It was not merely because she was lovely; it was because—well, strange as it seemed, it was because he knew that, having met her, he must on no account let her go.

Did she feel anything of what he felt? He did not know. But it seemed to him that presently she did look directly towards the winch every time she rounded the end

of the promenade, as though she expected him to be there. Once, too, when he was lounging at mid-day, he looked up, his attention was drawn up, and there she was on the boat-deck, gazing down at him. There was no mistaking her peculiar attention. She was studying him.

Their eyes met and held, and he was sure that hers held a question, as though she were asking herself why she was interested in him, why he called to her.

He reached her one day. He defied and evaded authority, slipped up companion-ladders, and made his way to her as she sat reading on the boat-deck. Ten feet from her he hesitated, wondering how he would approach her. She glanced up, as though he had called, though he had not spoken, and instant recognition and yet puzzlement came to her eyes. She blushed deliciously, but without embarrassment. The way she put down her book told that she expected him to speak to her, to talk over this strange thing that was happening to them.

Before he could move forward, the quartermaster, who had been at the gang-plank on the day of sailing, was on the scene, and even the desire of a very important young man availed nothing against a seamanlike sense of duty; Martin was ordered off the boat-deck, cutting, he felt, not too glorious a figure in the eyes of the girl.

The girl did not go on to the capital of Venaraguas, after all; she left the ship at Malinidad, a small port on the coast. Martin found it difficult to make people in authority realise that this was where he got off, too. He had taken a ticket through to Ventisquero, and all the regulations of Venaraguas seemed to insist that he should complete his journey. In the end he was forced to enter the Republic through the good offices of a bumboat man, and neither immigration nor any other authority had the slightest knowledge of his arrival.

But even in Malinidad it is not easy to find a girl, however beautiful she is. He did see her once on the sea ride, where all the leading citizens of the town took the air in the evening. He took a taxi and chased her, but the traffic jammed round a bandstand, and a policeman held him up, so that just as he found her again he lost her.

But somehow he knew that he had not lost her for good. Something told him that destiny had linked them definitely and indisputably. When, after two days of



fruitless search, a reasonless impulse drove him to the town docks, from which the little coastal steamers sailed, he went there as one fulfilling an appointment.

He went unerringly, through intricacies of dock railways and sheds and by gangs of fussy Latin stevedores, to where a small steamer was clearing for the sea. He was too late for her, for she was already moving

he stood and gazed at her. He felt a pang at having missed her by so narrow a margin, and yet he felt elated. He knew that this clue had been deliberately given to him, by whom, by what force he knew not. But he did know that he had come here for a definite purpose.

It was fantastic, illogical, idiotic. That saner part of him, the young man of the



"Señor Chubut was as quick. The strangers, taken by surprise that force should spring from so innocent a movement, were entirely trapped."

out into the fairway, but almost with a sense of foreknowledge he saw the girl was aboard her. She was standing by the after-rail, looking back at the dockside. Was she expecting to see him?

He almost thought so. She stiffened directly he appeared, gazed fixedly at him until the vessel was out into the bay. And

modern, comfortable, and exclusive world in him, protested at the folly. It rebelled against this absurd chase of an unknown woman, it rebelled against the discomfort, the exactions, the tedium, and, above all, the irresponsibility of his action. It was the sort of thing no young man of his education and station in life should do. He



had better stop this foolery at once and take the next mail home.

He did not go home. He took a power-boat up the coast for more travelling and more trouble. A bystander informed him that the little vessel carrying the girl was a coaster calling at inconspicuous ports, the names of which sounded like a litany of saints. Martin had money enough; his letter of credit,

felt that he was here and had come here for this definite and strange end.

At the second town of a saint he was in touch again. San Malachi was a small town, performing but a languid rôle in the vast scheme of life, and it would have been hard for him to miss her there. Destiny, however, gave the reunion a dramatic and romantic flavour.



"They threw up their hands as men recognising the folly of bravery at that instant."

negotiable all over the world, provided that. Even if he had had none, he would have found a way—would, indeed, have worked a passage through that string of saints' names up the coast by the labour of his hands. That was the way the strange thing had hold of him. He felt he must follow the unknown girl,

He had arrived in the warm, scented dusk of the tropic evening. He had disregarded the opinion of his attractive Venaraguan skipper that "At evening in a coast town more than the mosquitoes are dangerous," and he had gone ashore at once. The harbour-master, who made him pay an astounding



number of milreis for the privilege of ruffling the dust of San Malachi with his footfalls, told him that indeed an English señorita had landed but twelve hours before.

Martin went through the sandy streets to the hotel in which the girl was said to be staying. He reached a street so quiet that he could hear the dog monkeys barking away in the jungle, where the jungle itself seemed to be fighting with hungry green force to win back the ground which man had violated with his dull houses of adobe. As he entered that street he heard an English voice, a woman's voice, say clearly: "Stand away, or I will shoot!"

He heard a man's voice call in Spanish: "The cloak, José—*now!*"

He heard a muffled struggle, a slight scream. Running along the street, he came upon a little knot of men struggling round someone wrapped in the folds of a bright scarlet poncho. He knew who that someone was. He hit very hard when he reached his nearest man.

He hit again, and a man went down shouting. All the men turned, leaving the cloaked figure, and flung themselves upon him. He fought, using elbows, fists, and even knees, as they clawed and clung to him. He jammed one brute hard and firm in the belt regions with his right, and, that arm cleared, he whipped it again so vehemently to a jaw that he knocked another brute clean out. He shook them off and backed to a wall. Something came singing through the air, and a throwing-knife stuck quivering in the mud near his ear. Martin reached for his pistol and fired once.

He hit nobody—he did not want to—but it seemed that the single shot raised the whole town of San Malachi. It had made the ruffians bolt, but Martin guessed there might be other consequences.

He turned to the girl who stood beside him, flushed rather than pale, and with a smile of complete recognition in her eyes despite her anxiety. Her smile seemed to say, "Of course it *had* to be you." And Martin smiled, too. He felt that of course it had to be him. That was why he had come. That was why he was here. But though they smiled with this curious sense of intimacy, of destiny, he was also practical.

"You must get away at once," he said. "Is your hotel far?"

"A street away," she said. "No more."

Her voice was clear and soft and expressively beautiful—it fitted her loveliness.

"We must go to it," he said. He turned.

The uproar was tremendous. There were men and women and children and dogs rushing towards them, and two or three little policemen with drawn swords also. "No," he decided, "*you* must go. I will keep these people off. Can you find your way?"

"Yes," she said. "But you?"

"I will come to your hotel. I know where it is. Please go; I will rejoin you presently."

She went. Martin stood in the middle of the road, above the man he had knocked out. The crowd stopped at the sight of him and his victim, and the policemen, from a safe distance, spoke words of command, bidding him give himself up to justice.

Martin tried to explain that justice was more concerned with someone other than himself. But he did not know his Venaraguas. The little policemen were there to achieve the glory of an arrest, and it mattered not to them whether they had the right or the wrong man, as long as it was a man. Martin, tired out after several hours of attempting to reason with the collection of eloquent but indestructible idiots who represented the police force in San Malachi, spent the most unpleasant night of his existence in gaol.

He was extraordinarily anxious about the girl, the girl who was still a mysterious stranger, but whose meaning in his life seemed to have grown more decided, just as the appeal of her beauty had grown more powerful for that short, strange meeting. He fretted and fumed, and threatened the wrath of the British Empire in his anxiety, yet it was not until two o'clock on the next day that he was released. And then the whole process was but a matter of ten minutes.

Martin's affable skipper managed it. He arrived, it seemed, at his leisure, after hearing of the arrest, and he listened to Martin's very forceful opinions of Venaraguan justice with an indulgent smile.

"It is not that, señor," he said affably. "It is that you have used the wrong method. Have you a hundred milreis with you? *Bueno!* You are released."

And that was all of it. The skipper approached the captain of the police with the hundred milreis and came back empty-handed, and Martin was free.

Angry with himself for his lack of knowledge, he hurried to the hotel where the girl was staying. Here his anger turned to dismay. The girl had left.

He was, for the moment, taken aback. That the girl should leave, run away, though



he had rescued her, though she must know he had been flung into prison, seemed to him to be more than startling. It seemed as though she were deliberately avoiding him. She had left neither letter nor spoken message, apparently. She had gone away in the early hours of the morning of her own free will with a man who had met her when she landed. She had gone without a thought for him—or had it been deliberate thought?

Had he, after all, been that worst type of fool, the man who, of his own self-assurance, thrusts his presence where it is not wanted? The idea came to him with a shock. Had he been living in a paradise of fools? Had she not just naturally made use of her opportunity to escape from a pursuer who was distasteful to her?

He was so overcome by this idea that he asked no further questions, but had a bath and a meal in the very hotel she had stayed at. As time went on, he began to reject this—his first—idea. It was not merely that he came to feel that she *would* not have acted in this manner, that she was not of the type to treat a rescuer so cavalierly, to put it at its lowest, but he was beginning to feel definitely that she *had* not done so, beginning to feel almost painfully that it was wrong of her to go away without him, that it was wrong of him to wait here and not follow her.

It was curious how the feeling came to him. It was like an intuition, a presentiment, a force outside himself urging him on. He saw now that this queer impulse had been with him from the very first, from the moment he had set eyes on the girl. He understood that this "something" stronger than habit and common-sense had always been impelling him forward. He did not understand it at all, but now he recognised it was there. It was easier to recognise such strange things in this tropic air, in this small, mysterious, primitive jungle town.

He knew that he must go after the girl again, and go after her quickly now.

"I know where they said they were going, señor," said the keeper of the inn. "They *said* they were going to Iratia, which is to the north."

Martin assessed the man's agnostic tone successfully, and pushed certain currency bills across the counter.

"And where *did* they go, my friend?" he asked.

"They did not say—that is, the man who was guiding the señorita did not say. But he came in from the south, which is only

natural, since he is of Vidar. Also it is a strange thing for a man to be careful in his choice of horses when he is to journey by canoe. When one goes to Iratia one uses the canoe."

"But to reach Vidar?"

"One rides as a gentleman should, and the horse must be a good one."

Martin understood. He added a note to those already on the counter.

"Why should this man seek to mislead you?"

"He has that habit of mind, señor. You see, his calling is that of a robber."

That sentence, if nothing else, served to spur Martin on to Vidar. He did not understand how this girl should be consorting with a robber—he could gather nothing of her business—but he did feel, with a curious and well-defined certainty that seemed so natural in these mysterious, steamily-scented jungle spaces, that here was the reason for his being here, this was the end for which he had come so far and so strangely. He rode out at once, and his skipper, whose name was Chubut, went with him.

"I like you," said Señor Chubut. "It would distress me if your Excellency's throat was cut through some misunderstanding of the temperament of my countrymen; therefore I ride with you."

It was well, indeed, that Señor Chubut journeyed with him, for that evening, after riding all day through the sunless gloom of the jungle path, and when they were yet two leagues from Vidar, the Venaraguan pulled in his horse.

"This," he said amiably, "is where the señorita's guide ceased to be a guide. Here several men joined in, there was a struggle, and she was taken. Do you not read it so, señor?"

Martin read it so. On the path, soft with bush mist, there was the sign-manual of half a dozen horses stamping about in haste and confusion. There was also the brass shell of a pistol cartridge, showing the girl had fired at least once. In a bush was a lady's handkerchief. Martin, used to the hunter's trail, could read these signs.

They turned from the bush road. Without exchanging opinions, they followed a trail that struck off along a narrow wood-cutter's path through the now thinning trees.

"She was helpless, and they were leading her horse," said Señor Chubut. "See how her horse has blundered, and the thorn caught her robe."



A little later on he stopped, frowning over something lying on the ground, just where the trees gave way to the rolling pampas.

"A gauntlet," he said in surprise. "A woman's gauntlet. That is, strange. She must have worked that off, for, you see, it has a strap and buckle to hold it. It would seem as though she almost expected someone to see and understand."

"She did," said Martin with certainty. "That is meant for me."

In his heart he was saying: "She knew I would follow. She expected it."

That gauntlet was a signpost. They might have followed a dry bed of a stream, a natural road, and gone astray, for the sun-baked earth gave no sign of horse hoofs. The glove lying well out on the plain told them that the path led in another direction. Presently, in a patch of alfalfa, they came upon the traces of a body of horsemen sure of themselves and riding carelessly.

It was an hour later that they came to a collection of sprawling buildings, the casa and cantonments of a dead estancia situated at a point on the plain from which the clustering houses of Vidar could be faintly seen.

Three men were sitting under the wide sun-eave as they rode up. They stared level and without excitement. They returned Chubut's pious greeting with the grave courtesy of their race, and one of them, a most kingly cut-throat, rose and bowed, and told them that the house and the land and all it contained was theirs.

As they sat sucking *mate* under the sun-eave, Señor Chubut said gravely, in the tongue he had learnt from his Galway mother—

"Arrah, an' it's here she is, your honour! See, beyant the wee post yonder, there lies a gold hair-pin glittering in the sun." A little later he said: "Sure, she's over in yon barn. For why? A man has gone into it with his eyes slantin' this way and his hand on his gun. How are you going to get her, sor?"

"This way," said Martin, lying back indolently in his cow-hide chair. As he sank back, his hand came out from his pocket, and in it was a ten-shot automatic.

Señor Chubut was as quick. The strangers, taken by surprise that force should spring from so innocent a movement, were entirely trapped. They threw up their hands as men recognising the folly of bravery at that instant.

"Señor," said Martin to the leader, "will you kindly incommode yourself to the extent of going with my friend to release the young lady? The rest of you, will you stand face to the wall and meditate upon the profound truth that my pistol shoots ten times without reloading, and always with the greatest accuracy?"

\* \* \* \*

When Señor Chubut, the girl, and Martin had ridden a mile from the house, she swung her horse to head, not to San Malachi, but to Vidar.

"There is something to do there?" asked Martin.

"The thing I came out here to do. My brother is in prison there. I came out to free him."

"Ah, that is it," Señor Chubut broke in in Spanish. "You brought much money to do that, hey? Knowing the temperament of my countrymen, the whole thing is now explained."

"I do not see it so easily," said Martin.

"But it is simple," said Señor Chubut. "One day this lady, in her home in Grand Britain, receives a letter which is a great shock. It tells her that her dear brother is in an unpleasant Venaraguan gaol. It tells her that his prison is strong and his sentence lengthy. It tells her that the conditions are so bad that a man like her brother will very likely die. It tells her that, though his case seems hopeless, there are at least one or two devoted souls here in Vidar who think they might effect a release—for a consideration. This lady, being an English milady, and of infinite wealth—"

"No," breathed the girl, "not wealth. We are poor."

"Well, she knowing where to put her hands on the money required, does so put her hands. Out here she comes with that money; she is met by a devoted soul at San Malachi, she rides up here, to meet the other devoted souls, only to find they are gentlemen robbers."

"How did you know all this?" said the girl.

"The temperament of my countrymen. It is a thing that has been done before. It is a thing that I myself might do, given the good fortune."

"It is true, then?" said Martin.

"Quite true," said the girl. "I received such a letter. It told me that my brother was in prison, serving a ten-year sentence for shooting a man. It said that the sentence was an unjust one, but that my brother was



alone and helpless in this out-of-the-way place. The writer stated that he and certain chosen companions could effect my brother's release if I could send or bring to them a sum equal to five hundred pounds."

"Did you believe this?"

"Oh, yes. My brother has a lonely station about twenty miles away from Vidar. Also we had not heard from him for months, and we—my mother and I—were terribly anxious. Also this letter enclosed a note from my brother in his handwriting. It said that he had been forced to shoot one of his peons in self-defence. Because he was a foreigner, because his land was coveted by some local bigwig, and because he could not get in touch with any consul, the case had gone against him, and, after standing for trial, he had been flung into gaol. His letter was brave, but he hinted at the unlikelihood of a European being able to endure Latin prison conditions for long. He made it plain that he thought he must escape if he was to save his life. To this end he had got in touch with a man he thought he could rely on, who would write to me explaining how an escape could be managed. That letter convinced me, and I came out."

"You were quite right, señorita," said Señor Chubut. "That letter was undoubtedly genuine. These robbers recognised that to bring you—and the money—they would have to act with intelligence."

"The blackguards!" cried Martin. "You mean they got that letter from this lady's brother solely that they might rob her?"

"But naturally," said Señor Chubut in surprise. "His eyes came round to the girl. 'Might one ask if their labour met with triumph, señorita?'"

"No," said the girl. "The money lies in the bank at San Malachi, and can only be released by my signature. I felt it was not safe to bring so large a sum out into the wilds."

Señor Chubut took off his hat to her.

"Señorita," he said, bowing, "you showed a conception of the situation worthy of one of my own race. Also, since the money is intact, we can proceed to do ourselves what those robbers promised to do, and might have done, if their own interest had not naturally been of more importance to them."

"You will obtain the release of my brother, señor?" cried the girl, her breath coming fast.

"Undoubtedly. I know the methods of my land. And, since I am not a gang or

corporation, it shall be done for half the sum."

"Señor, how can I thank you?"

"When the señorita looks at me like that, it is I who am in debt. My race has never failed in chivalry. Also, señorita, I mentioned it would cost you half the sum."

"But it is tremendous," Martin said to the girl presently—"to think of you undertaking all this alone."

"There was nobody else," she said simply. "It had to be me."

"But to come alone! Couldn't you have sent someone, or written?"

"No," she said. "There was nobody else to send. And I did not know to whom I should write, and—and I didn't want to put it into other hands. I feared delays, mistakes—everything. No, I had to come and see it through myself. I have been to Venaraguas before; I wasn't altogether unused to the conditions."

"But alone!" he cried. "Didn't you funk it?"

"Yes, at first, perhaps, and then later"—she looked quickly at him—"I seemed to feel—I knew it would be all right."

"You knew I was coming?" he said slowly.

"Yes, I think that must have been it. Yes, I think now that I felt all along that you were to look after me."

"It's the queerest thing. I've been feeling that all along, too. I felt it directly I saw you on the boat-deck in England."

"That was it!" she cried. "I looked down at you standing there, and I knew what you were there for."

"And I suppose I knew, too, inside me," he said, "though I never really understood until I got to San Malachi. I must have known, why else did I come? I was going to Canada, you know. But even at San Malachi I had a moment of doubt. I expected you to leave some sort of message before going on."

"I left a letter," she said. "I gave it to that man who guided me. He told me he had handed it to you, but of course he lied. I see it now. It was you he was afraid of when he urged me to leave at once. He said he feared that knowledge that I carried much money must have got to the ruffians of the town, which was likely, as they attacked me. But it was really you he was afraid of. But though you thought me an ingrate, you came on."

"Yes, it was all part of this strange thing.



I felt for a moment that you wished to have nothing more to do with me, yet I came on."

"You *had* to," she said. "I knew you had to, so did you. It was written."

"Yes, it's the queerest thing," he said again. "A sort of destiny, isn't it? Nobody would believe it, but there it is—it's happened."

"Yes, it had to happen, and it has happened. And I haven't thanked you yet. You know how I do, and yet, somehow, I feel that it is not necessary."

"Quite unnecessary." He smiled. "It was, as you say, written that I should look after you. We have both done just what we had to do. The whole thing was foreordained. That and more—we had to come together, don't you feel that, too?"

He saw in her eyes that she felt it, and how glad she was to feel it. There was no doubting the light in her eyes and the delicate and delicious softness that had come to her face.

Señor Chubut coughed beside them.

"A thousand pardons," he said, "but

here it is we enter Vidar. If the señorita would deign to give so lowly a personage as myself her name, and that of her honoured but incarcerated brother, I could enter upon the diplomacy of his escape at once."

"Name!" echoed Martin, and he turned to the girl with a laugh. "Isn't it amazing? I don't know your name yet. Mine is Martin Seton."

"Mine is Agnes Mairis," she said, smiling. "My brother, Señor Chubut, is Robert Mairis."

"In three days, señorita," cried Señor Chubut, with a flourish, "his Excellency your brother will be on the Señor Martino's vessel and in safety. And in a month"—his eyes twinkled—"or maybe more, for all time is but to-morrow, I think the Señor Martino will not have to ask your name, though it will be a new one. He will know it as well as his own."

And, as usual, Señor Chubut was right in all things. Martin knew the girl's name as well as his own before the month was out, and quite naturally, for it had become his own.



## THE WOOD.

**T**HAT wood where all the song-birds go  
After they die is hard to find.

Search for it. There's no breeze will blow  
Its secret to your ears, although  
The wood is known to each soft wind.

Hidden it is from frost and snow:  
Spring and love reign there, glad and kind;  
Songs sound above, around, below  
That wood.

The way is far? Ah, stay behind,  
Faint-hearts, for sure it must be so:  
Hard seems it often, and unkind,  
Through withering frost and blasts that blind,  
But it is found at last . . . I know  
That wood.

ETHEL TALBOT.





"Three tiny piglets seated all of a row before a roaring fire, each piglet solemnly applying himself to a 'dummy' fixed into the neck of a bottle full of milk."

# THROUGH THE NOSE

## THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF A PERFORMING PIG

By L. R. BRIGHTWELL, F.Z.S.

*Illustrated by the Author*

THE world will never take a grotesquely-shaped nose quite seriously.

The doctor may, but this is not a world of doctors. The nose, together with old cheese, chance tumbles over slippery banana skins, the telephone and plumbers, stands as part of Britain's last stronghold and donjon keep of light humour. A hundred famous figures culled from fact and fiction, with poor Cyrano de Bergerac at one end of the scale and breezy Ally Sloper at the other, are remembered chiefly by their noses. As for the birds and beasts, the toucan, hornbill, parrot, ant-eater, elephant, and the pig, may always be relied upon to raise a laugh. We may think seriously about the pig when it comes to making money out of him dead or alive, or trying to pass Acts of Parliament which shall ameliorate his fiendish death, but as

for regarding him in person as anything but a joke, the accepted butt and low comedian of the farmyard—no, we cannot. Look at his nose!

Nosy Parker—or, as he came to be called later, Mr. Parks—was what the North of England designates a "wreckling." He was the thirteenth in a late litter, and, together with two little companions, was brought up on the bottle. Several times each day you might have seen, in the spacious kitchen at Clayburn Farm, three tiny piglets seated all of a row before a roaring fire, each piglet solemnly applying himself to a "dummy" fixed into the neck of a bottle full of milk. Mr. Parks, as the least promising of the three, had pride of place—the middle one—for extra warmth. He took his milk from a bottle that had once served a child. Brother on the left



was contented with a discarded oatmeal stout. Brother on the right affected an old linseed oil bottle. There is room for many minor accidents on a busy farmstead. Thus you might at times have seen lamentable strife before the kitchen fire. This meant that Mr. Parks had been provided with the wrong bottle. The vessels that had once held respectively linseed oil and stout were to him abhorrent. Similarly, brother on the right would have none of the baby's feeder or the alcoholic flagon. Brother on the left equally resented being given the baby's feeder or the linseed oil bottle. But the worst of the three piglets was Mr. Parks. Brother on the left *might* at times content himself with the wrong bottle, provided the contents were to his liking, but Mr. Parks never. He would tackle his brother as dog tackles dog, and there were sad wailings when one day the baby's feeder, still tightly gripped between the lips of a wrongful owner, came to grief against the leg of the kitchen table. But hunger levels all men, and ere long Mr. Parks was sucking vigorously at a "stone ginger."

Not that life was all milk and scuffles, so far as Mr. Parks was concerned, at any rate. Master Tommy Phelps, aged eight, though destined to continue the family tradition and become a farmer, was at heart a showman. He had the showman's instinct, and shirked most duties, from school to brushing his boots, in its indulgence. Every day, and more than once a day, he took Mr. Parks into a quiet corner of the yard, or—when the powers were out of sight—up into his bedroom, and there laid down the bedrock of Mr. Parks's education, and turned him into a pig that should one day become a character strong enough to rise above the common herd and ultimately cheat the butcher. For the instincts of the true showman lie much deeper than a mere knack of publicity. They include a gentle and persuasive manner, more than Job-like patience, and a common-sense assumption that the only way to train an animal is to develop and elaborate *what it already knows*. Tom had not lived in an atmosphere of "pig" for nothing. He knew that a pig can run, jump, sit up on its haunches, turn round and round upon its own axis, and grunt. At the end of two months Mr. Parks could beg like a dog, "die for his country," and grunt in response to his young master's voice in a way that made him (Mr. Parks) appear far more knowing

than he was in actuality. At the command "Over the top!" he would lurch over a piece of old umbrella handle held not too high from the ground. No wonder Mr. Parks became unusually precocious. The pig is not the cunning fool that he looks, and Mr. Parks's brain and body, both unusually stimulated, thrrove apace. Their owner became a blustering little bully, who cowed his brethren, terrorised the cat and poultry, and defied the dogs. On occasions, when Farmer Phelps neglected to lock the kitchen door, the morning light discovered Mr. Parks asleep, not in the box that housed his brethren, but upon the foot of his young master's bed. Tommy Phelps, son of a not too affluent farmer, became the richest boy in the village. He and his school friend had easily the finest collection of marbles, conkers, and halfpence to be found within a two-mile radius of Beverley. The explanation might have been witnessed any Saturday afternoon, when the friend would have been discovered acting the part of "box office" at the door of a secluded cowshed, what time Tommy Phelps, within, exhibited the gifts, natural and cultivated, of Mr. Parks to an appreciative audience. It was an idyllic time for pig and patfon. Then the blow fell.

Farmer Phelps was not an animal lover. He believed that bird and beast were actually created for man's sole enjoyment and emolument—especially emolument. Also his "faith" taught him that shows of any kind were an abomination and a stumbling block. He was, in fact, a fine old example of a fast disappearing type, and, true to type, had a shrewd eye for the main chance. Mr. Parks must go, and here the farmer showed his worth. At the time of which we write, all pleasure-loving Britons held their sides and wiped their streaming eyes at the antics of one Bimbo—otherwise Josiah Stokes—a prince of clowns. For years Bimbo and his pig had together chased the demon Gloom, until one day the clown was left to face the foe alone. His pig died. Farmer Phelps's eye, travelling slowly up and down the market reports in the local news-sheet, saw the sad news, and that very day his boy's pet was advertised. The fish rose to the bait. Two days later a cut-and-dried sort of letter informed the farmer that J. Stokes would "view" the pig and, if found satisfactory, pay the thirty shillings demanded.

No mere words at our command can paint the mental condition of Tommy



Phelps when he arrived at the nearest station, after a five-mile tramp, and settled down to await the arrival of the ten-fifteen from London. "Settled down" is the wrong term, for a caged tiger awaiting the feeding hour would have seemed restful compared with

would the clown of clowns arrive? What would he do? For, you see, Tommy Phelps had seen him only through one rapturous afternoon, when, unknown to his father, he visited a circus. The memory was a year old, but burned as brightly as

though the event had occurred but yesterday. You and I, reader, sophisticated moderns, know the greatest clown to be a man like ourselves, who, off the stage, is filled with cares, family and financial, and when "on" too often cuts his grotesque capers with a fevered brain and aching heart. But to Tom he was not so much a man as a glorious, kindly goblin figure straight from the magic pages of Lewis Carroll. Would he burst from the carriage with a merry "Here we are again!" and the latest catch-phrase, or would he fire himself in a series of double somersaults, a glittering ball of concentrated fun, from the cavernous mystery of the guard's van? Very likely he would appear in some screamingly funny fashion that would beat all his previous efforts in the ring. The youthful pig trainer danced on one leg at the



"Mr. Parks would pick out, slowly and with much grunting, a series of letters which spelt some political catch-phrase of the moment."

the small boy, feverishly fidgeting up and down the platform, wiping his moist hands upon his corduroys, plucking dandelion heads, chewing grass, the while he kept his eyes glued to the down line signal. How

thought, until the ten-fifteen arrived.

A door opened, the green flag fluttered in the wintry mist, the whistle screamed, and the train from London vanished round the bend. There was left upon the platform



a solitary figure without luggage, and having the appearance of a very seedy undertaker's man. He was dressed in black from his rusty topper to his bulbous boots, yet he was not in mourning. This was his holiday garb. His every step and gesture spelt gloom. Only one thing saved him from being the ideal child frightener—his eyes. They drew a sadly dashed Tommy towards him and elicited the following inquiry: "A-a-p-p-p-please are you the pig man?"

"I am," His voice fell upon the quiet station like a single boom from a bass drum. He extended a lean forefinger to Tommy Phelps, and, hand in hand, that strange pair walked in silence to the farm. There Mr. Parks was put through his paces, not without difficulty, for Mr. Parks, like many another artiste, was not always "in the mood." He had that very trying thing, a "temperament," and he showed it. But after ten minutes the man in the awful clothes had seen enough. The youthful trainer might have spared his apologies for the little pig. The mirthless clown drew the little boy into an adjacent barn.

"My boy," said he, "I'm giving you just what I consider that pig is worth to me, as he stands, and he's standing in your father's corn bin, by the way. That's a bargain, eh?" And he crammed a piece of crisp and crackly paper into the breast of the astonished urchin's blouse. The wails of Mr. Parks blended presently with the distant sobs of his late master, for not all the five-pound notes could at first smooth the harshness of the separation when at last the moment came. No matter that it had been long anticipated—this was the reality. Mr. Parks was the first to recover. A carrot and a knob or two of sugar soon made him the happiest little pig that ever travelled townwards in a third smoker, and accompanied by a gloomy man in black who conned a book of sermons.

The public always gets what it wants if it waits long enough. Sixty years ago it fell down and worshipped the loud-voiced man who, armed to the teeth, entered a cage full of lions and terrorised them into leaping through hoops of flame and performing equally elevating exhibitions of the "trainer's art." No matter that the weapons, flames, and thundering voice were three parts camouflage; the public expected them, and the goods were delivered. Later, as education did its work, the pendulum swung the other way. Everything should be done by kindness. The same tricks

were performed, but the showman, instead of dressing like a Russian count and cracking a gigantic whip, smirked before his gaping audience and told them that the tricks—the same old tricks of the hot iron and revolver epoch—had now taken "twenty years to perfect." A show lion rarely treads the boards for more than seven years, but that by the way. And then presently there dawned a period—which has not yet reached its high noon—when humanity and common-sense began to make themselves a power in the world of paint and tinsel. "Bimbo," the darling of the sawdust ring, had both virtues. He realised that the public expected a show at once amusing and artistic, and he knew how to produce the desired effect.

Bimbo knew his pig from A to Z, but—and herein he showed himself an artist—ever questioned his hardly-won knowledge. He was that peculiarly modern product, an animal psychologist. The animal mind was to him a vast and awesome country, in which he, a humble traveller, was painfully journeying in a darkness that often promised, yet never quite realised, the dawn. Under his tuition Mr. Parks was a pig transformed. Always used to kindness, he now enjoyed a life which his former master could not hope to give. Every day, weather permitting, he was bathed. On sunless days he had a dry clean. The pig louse, flea, and tick were never found upon him. His meals were regular and of the best. During the three months when Bimbo was, so far as the public was concerned, "resting," he never lost sight of his master. He sat beside him at meals, but never ate with him. He slept on the foot of his bed, until his increasing size demanded a pallet to himself, followed his master like a dog, and was, indeed, in general deportment, discipline, and sanitation, far more like a well-trained house-dog than a common Berkshire boar, a pig, unclean and accursed by the prophet of old. But though well trained as a dog, he was never treated as one. Bimbo knew the pig mind too well. A dog can to a great extent live on love. Flattery can become to him a full meal. But the pig never forgets his stomach. Bimbo never forgot Mr. Parks's. At first his every token of obedience was rewarded on the spot with a piece of carrot or a sweet. To avoid over-feeding, his regular meals—two per day—were reduced so that the whole amount consumed per day should never overtax his digestion. Later the regular meals became bulkier, and the



"rewards" few and far between. But Mr. Parks always lived in hopes of just one more mouthful. That he jumped through a hoop or waved a flag twenty times, and received nothing, did not worry him—there was always the possibility of getting a tit-bit upon the twenty-first occasion. And never was he wholly disappointed.

But routine did not altogether fill his day. The clown was ever on the alert for the unexpected. An unusually comic grunt or

enthusiasm or his temper, or betrayed an overworked patience. The brute never lost his hope of just another tit-bit, and, moreover, a genuine affection for his master had its birth, and presently began to run a neck-and-neck race with his appetite. A grotesque and absurd sight, perhaps, this daily spectacle of the earnest, solemn man of forty for many hours—though never for more than thirty minutes at a stretch—in the company of a mere pig. The

spectator would have laughed, in derision, perhaps, to see them; he would have laughed louder in sheer enjoyment to see them as they appeared later in their war-paint, "on the halls." Enthusiasts proclaimed from many a platform the hard lot of the "performing animal," and then perhaps went home to eat a dish of pork. With Mr. Parks it was a case of the foot-lights or the shambles, and a kindly Fate had cast him for the foot-lights. Where is the reader who will begrudge the brute its life?

The modern trainer does not recognise the word "monotony." He lives from day to day, with his eyes ever set upon the golden vision of a "hit" that he will somewhere, somehow, somewhen, surely make. The daily lessons in a back room on the ground floor of Josiah Stokes's suburban residence presently had a different setting—a syndicate hall

stage, with just enough light and noise to accustom Mr. Parks to "service conditions," so that he did himself and his bespangled master more than justice when at last, upon a certain night, the curtain rose.

It would be a mere waste of good type and paper to tell the reader how that first audience, and thousands after it, laughed at Bimbo and his pig. Such turns fall deadly cold and flat in print. Their whole joy lies in the actual seeing



"Leaning, like some old cottager, over the half-door of his ample quarters."

gurgle made by Mr. Parks was on the instant rewarded with some special dainty. Presently the pig's pear-shaped brain grasped the fact that a certain sound produced a bit of sugar soaked in linseed oil, another would evoke a bit of dried toadstool, or a third—oh, porcine rapture!—elicit a peppermint. Thus gradually was built up the famous set of "imitations" that so delighted audiences for some three years in this and other countries. The man never lost his



of them. When a show relies for half of its effects on grotesque gestures and guttural noises, not even the cinema or "wireless" can hope to do it full justice. Pig and clown grew as firmly established and reliable, as a "draw," as did the latter's bank balance, and any night you might have seen them "between houses," the pig prone and snoring on his mat, and the man bolting a plate of steak and onions or scribbling his way through a mountainous pile of autograph albums. L.C.C. regulations do not permit animals to be kept in dressing-rooms, so the eccentric Josiah and his *protégé* camped out in Property and Canvas Land, behind the back cloth on the ground floor of the music hall. Mr. Parks spent several years in many lands, and enjoyed life to the full. In working time he had two gods, Josiah Stokes, alias Bimbo, and a certain locked box in which lived the victuals which the porcine artiste loved. Only once can he be said to have let his master down. That was when he "muffed" his famous thought-reading act.

A heap of cards, each bearing a huge letter, was cast upon the stage. "Ha, ha," the clown would say, "I can see that gentleman is a politician! What's he thinking of?" And Mr. Parks would pick out, slowly and with much grunting, a series of letters which spelt some political catchphrase of the moment. Similar harmless jokes were made at the expense of some cricketer, tennis champion, anyone, in fact, who at the moment held the public eye. But the last "stunt" never varied.

"Well, Parky Boy, what is it your master's never going to let you become?"

The answer should have been the one word "HAM."

The whole secret, of course, lay in certain gestures and noises made by Bimbo, unheeded by the audience, but full of significance to Mr. Parks. And on that historic occasion Mr. Parks missed his cue. He produced A—it was part of the turn to spell haphazard—and then he found an M, and with his right fore dragged it into position until it came to rest upon the left-hand side of the A, so that to anyone on the stage the word read MA, seen upside down, but to the audience was clearly AM. And then Mr. Parks, for some extraordinary reason, went to pieces. He approached the letter H, wavered, grunted, and in spite of his master's agonised tongue-clickings and furtive finger-snapping, ponderously and

deliberately selected in turn every other letter on the stage. Not till later did it transpire that the cards had been thumbed by a stage hand whilst partaking of a dish of onions, and his fragrant fingers had rendered each one of the cards equally attractive to the epicurean Parks.

Josiah Stokes, like many of his class, was a fatalist. When companions raised their glasses in some public bar and said hilariously, "Well, here's another thousand a year, old man!" Josiah would sip his ginger cordial and say, with his famous ironical smile, "Thanks, an' cheerio, but there's a catch in it somewhere." He was right.

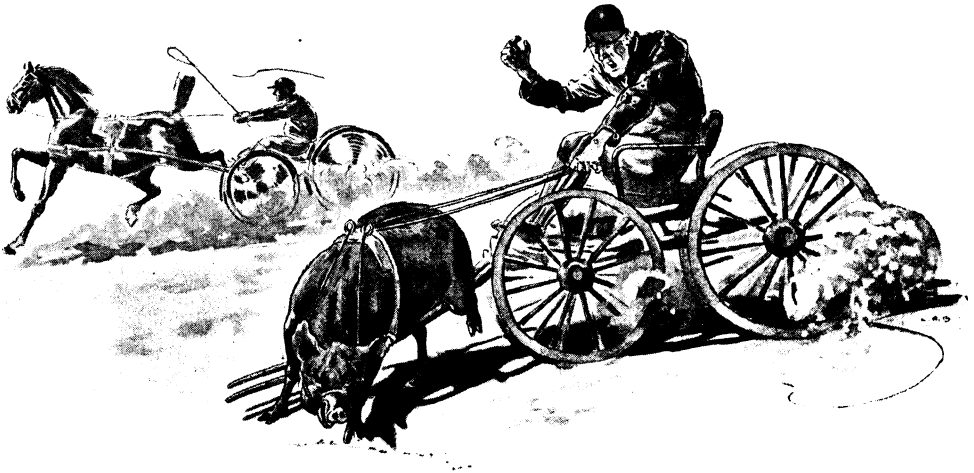
All work and no play would have made Mr. Parks a dull pig. His master knew this, and once every year he indulged the wandering instinct, which assails all healthy beasts sooner or later, by "boarding out" Mr. Parks at some convenient farm. A childless widower and dour by nature, Josiah Stokes had still a host of friends in the profession. Parks was, like many dogs, a "one man" animal, so he usually went to a farm where his peculiar temperament would be understood. Here he saw, with his little deep-set, uncomprehending eyes, many a strange sight. Leaning, like some old cottager, over the half-door of his ample quarters, he blinked upon a goat being coaxed to balance itself upon the summit of a ginger-beer bottle, or some two score horses, each horse with a groom upon its back, serpentineing their way up a crude pyramid of scaffolding and packing cases. Later, during his holiday, Mr. Parks would see the goat leap upon the ginger-beer bottle of its own free will, gibbering with expectancy at the prospect of sugar, and the horses wind their way up the pyramid unriden and uncontrolled save by one man upon the outskirts of the "dummy" circus ring. One day, when the circus took the road, the goat would leap nimbly upon the bottle, to the accompaniment of a single deep note on the bass drum, and the horses would scale a gilt and scarlet pyramid, their feet keeping perfect time with a band, at present represented by a farm-hand beating a bunch of saucepan lids and a dilapidated tin bath. Provided that the band *really keeps time with the horses*, the effect in a well-managed pyramid act leaves nothing to be desired. These and many other stranger sights did the perpetually munching Mr. Parks gaze upon, as anybody may who has the privilege to live upon a "circus farm."

The circus year consists of thirty-four



weeks only. Mr. Parks would, ere the caravans trundled away upon the long trail, be claimed by his master and taken on a syndicate tour of the halls. He had another week to run, and he chose to leave three days before his time. Ever restless and inquisitive, Mr. Parks's short but skilful snout neatly unshipped the latch of his "run" one misty morning, and, unnoticed by any save a piebald pony and a four-legged duck, the huge black Berkshire marched out of the yard and took the road alone, bent upon a voyage of discovery. Two fields away a team of elephants was ploughing. Their keeper had enough to do to have no eyes for Mr. Parks. Moreover, the mist closed down and became something very like a fog. When it lifted three hours

On that occasion Mr. Parks quietly but firmly announced his intention of retiring from the race until the maize was eaten, every grain of it. But these and all other professional glories were behind him now, never to return. He ploughed onwards up a sandy track between high walls of broom and heather, and as he plodded he ate things which were in glaring contrast to his regular diet, but none the less acceptable. Ere he had done five miles that day he consumed several pounds of bracken tops, many pints of heath snails, a slow-worm, two lizards, the greater portion of a clump of comfrey covering some five square feet of ground, a dead mole, quantities of marsh grass, and an adder. This last he disposed of in a way peculiarly his own. He bit off and discarded



"The famous 'trotting pig' was for years a looked-for feature of many a trotting match and horse show in the North country."

later, Mr. Parks was far from the madding crowd and fast-rising hue and cry, and was out and away upon the fell country in a new and strange world that he found more fascinating at every step he took. He made considerable progress. Ten miles a day was nothing to Mr. Parks. He had done fifteen on occasion, when, as leader of a team of goats, he had helped to haul his master's gig, loaded high with camping outfit. That gig was known both in the ring and on the trail. The famous "trotting pig" was for years a looked-for feature of many a trotting match and horse show in the North country. Given a fair start, Mr. Parks was always victor. He had met defeat but once, and that was when some evilly-disposed backer laid a trail of maize across his course.

the head, and then, grasping the neck between his chisel-like incisors, "reeled" it in, inch by inch, as though it had been a tape measure. It was about two feet long. Then, much refreshed, Mr. Parks found a place where the mouths of several rabbit burrows made a sun-warmed cup, and disposed himself for sleep.

It was late when he awoke, and the sun was setting. There was nobody in sight. The great pig rose and shook himself. Then he gazed round, nose in air, tasting the freshness of the evening breeze for signs of master. Mr. Parks was troubled. Never before had he been without companionship for so long. Society of some sort is essential to a pig, save when in extreme old age he sometimes acquires a fondness for his own



company. But just now Mr. Parks felt that the world was altogether wrong. He wandered miserably onwards, his grunts of pleasure at passing snacks soon giving place to a gurgling whine that told of loneliness and fear. He wandered all that first night, and when the day came solaced himself with half a dead hare, which he found caught by the neck in a "run," and stretched his aching limbs beneath a spreading dogwood. When he awoke he rose and fed and plodded aimlessly onwards, but still with no satisfaction in his new-found liberty. He began to scratch himself against convenient trees, and ever and anon he stopped to nibble grumblingly at his feet. They, like all things just now, were wrong. Mud and dirt and thorns were working up between his narrow toes. He had never before walked so far unshod: he had generally worn a set of high-shanked leather boots. He missed these boots, but he missed his master more, for the moment.

For three days he saw no signs of human beings. On the fourth day he fell upon a porcine Eldorado. This was a potato field. Mr. Parks knew nothing of potato fields; he only knew that every time he dug his snout into the ground and raised it with a jerk, up came a little bunch of round things that tasted most exquisitely delicious. He moved steadily forwards until he came to a hedge. Then he turned round and worked back again, parallel to his original course. In this way he spoilt two rows of "new," and would have spoilt a third, had not a ragged youth, scaring birds some three fields distant, come upon the scene and remonstrated with Mr. Parks. The youth's hobnailed boots figured largely in the argument. But not for long. Mr. Parks had never been so treated in his life before. The Berkshire breed can on occasion develop a very threatening pair of tusks. Mr. Parks took about a dozen kicks without anything worse than verbal protests, then he hit back. . . .

The end of that week found him still at large and prepared to enjoy life if only he could fall in with congenial society, and also if his feet might be less painful. He was, in fact, beginning to hesitate at his first cross-roads in life. He would have returned to his master joyously; he would also, with very little encouragement, have reverted to the wild. As it was, he dug one tusk, still ornamented with a shred of corduroy, into a wasps' nest, withdrew it with a "whoof" of disgust, and stamped on over the rolling

heather country. He was a masterless pig indeed, for England was mourning one Bimbo, a famous clown who had died suddenly and tragically of heart failure in the very heyday of his popularity. The newspapers exhausted his career and personality in the course of five or six editions, and within a week his memory was dimming fast even with the theatre-going public. The actor's art is notoriously ephemeral. Bimbo's was forgotten almost so soon as the laughter had died upon the public's lips, and his collaborator wandered without honour or recognition—a stray pig rooting for a bare living upon a Yorkshire moor.

But the wanderings were soon to terminate. Upon the afternoon of the eighth day of his life as a gentleman at large, Mr. Parks might have been seen giving an exhibition of his powers to a gathering of boys and girls freshly released from the village school. Somebody started the show by generously offering an apple core. That was enough for Mr. Parks. Here was an audience such as he could understand and appreciate. A chance motor narrowly escaped running him down in the act of "dying for his country"—a performance with which he suddenly "obliged" in the hope of eliciting further contributions. That was in the village of Store, but he did not stay there long. Instead, he pushed on at a hand gallop to the town of Tower Minster, a mile and a half further on upon the old York Road. He made the change of "pitch" for sufficient reasons. The village was "after" the performing pig. Now, Mr. Parks was used only to do the bidding of one man, the late Josiah Stokes. Consequently he bitterly resented all attempts to hold him by the ear or insinuate a rope around his hindquarters. He entered Tower Minster at the double, gained the centre of the square—it was market day—and there stopped. It was late in the afternoon, and the last of the stock was being driven, dragged, and carted away by the various purchasers. Mr. Parks stood with his heavy head held close to the ground and gently swaying back and forth, his huge ears cocked at a familiar sound. He followed that sound. It took him round a corner—several, in fact—and hard upon the heels of a pair of mongrel sows in the charge of an astonished drover. Mr. Parks, who had been wont to travel in a touring car, now galumphed through the public streets to the accompaniment of a drover's shouts.



But no matter. Here was society he understood—a blessed relief from that uncanny solitude—and, having found it, he followed it through half a mile of streets, up a cobbled yard, and into the condemned cell owned by a certain Jodkins, family butcher and purveyor of home-killed meat.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Have seen pig up t’ station?”

P.C. Nathan put the question to his colleagues two nights later, when they mustered at Linden Square ere departing for their several beats. To his great satisfaction they had not. This gave him a chance to enter upon a somewhat rambling account of the amazing pig which had “given hissen up” to “yon Jodkins,” and who, under suspicion of being the famous clown’s pig extensively advertised upon its mysterious disappearance eight days previously, was now being detained pending further inquiries. He wound up by strongly recommending them to see the animal and its extraordinary range of accomplishments, which, it appeared, were always to be enjoyed upon the production of suitable forms of bribery. His last words were: “They’ve got ’un in cowhouse back o’ Newton’s.”

Now, Newton was a local dairyman, whose premises abutted on to the police station, and his cowhouse had sheltered many strange “cases,” from ill-used hacks to performing bears, and had held once a circus monkey inconceivably intoxicated. Constable Nathan, when he told his comrades they would find the pig in the cowhouse, spoke of what he knew to be a fact—two hours prior to his going on duty. But a lot can happen in two hours. What Mr. Parks had done to the gate latch at the circus farm he had done again, and was now once more at large, and, under cover of darkness, was well away for North Code, on the Yapley Road. He made a tolerable breakfast in the early morning, thanks to some market gardens, and Yapley Heath is full of cosy corners where a hog may slumber undisturbed. He might have remained at large, perhaps, for some days longer had he slept till nightfall, but he chose to rise at four in the afternoon, and, gaining the road, rummaged round the dicky of Lady Upton’s car. The dicky smelt of lunch. A Pekingese sitting in the back forgot his mistress, gathering heather some yards away, and advanced upon Mr. Parks with a courage worthy of a creature twenty times his size. At the same time Fate decreed that a half-

bred, quarter-grown Airedale from a neighbouring farm should chance along the road and act with an aggressiveness such as ill-becomes a dog capable of taking in a Pekingese, comparatively speaking, at a mouthful. The sleeve dog shrieked with rage and, as the rough and tumble made its way around the car, began to scream with fear and agony. By the time her ladyship and a willing but quite helpless chauffeur arrived upon the scene, the fight had taken on an entirely different complexion. The Airedale, suddenly coming in contact with Mr. Parks—reared upon his hind legs and already operating on the dicky’s latch—so incensed that artiste that he was compelled to drop the spaniel and give all his attention to his own defence. A pig and dog fight is a nasty thing to have to deal with, especially when the dog has not quite nimbleness and weight enough to seize the pig’s ear, and the pig is making most determined efforts, according to the porcine law of battle, to slash open the stomach of his adversary. The upshot of it all may be readily foreseen. Mr. Parks was regarded as Choo-Choo’s natural deliverer, an entirely false assumption, but it is the one Lady Upton reached. Somehow Mr. Parks was taken back to Upton Manor, and, as the result of more inquiries and negotiations with the late clown’s next-of-kin, remained there. The chauffeur’s account of that afternoon, by the way, is altogether more entertaining, but we have no room for it. The occasion involved his employer in the purchase of a new uniform.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Parks is still living. He is old and grizzled, and is known to the neighbours as Bismarck, through a certain fancied resemblance he is supposed to bear to the Iron Chancellor. He has forgotten nearly all his tricks, and is most abominably spoilt, as witness him this sunny afternoon, when he comes under the bespectacled eyes of his patroness, gazing from her study window across the pleasant fields of Upton Manor Farm.

The butler rises heavily from his chair and, with an effort, bends himself till his ear comes level with the speaking-tube.

“Yes, yes, m’lady! In the large potato field, is he? Yes, yes, I’ll send the boys out after him at once, m’lady. Certain’y!”

Mr. Parks, his nose well under a plant, suddenly raises his head, and another clump of “Nonsuch Surprise” is flung into the air. Curtain!





"She lived to play."

# THE GREATER MAGIC

By F. DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

GRAHAM WEST did not wait for the maid to announce him. He dashed across the hall, flung open the drawing-room door, and stood there in the entrance, gasping with sheer excitement.

"Well?" The girl on the ottoman rose to her feet. Her eyes, dark violet and curiously compelling, lit up with pleasure. "Something wonderful, is it, Graham?" she asked, and thought how like a schoolboy he looked, with his flushed cheeks and ruffled hair.

West laid his hands on her shoulders.

"Something wonderful? By Jove, Valerie, wait till you hear! I could run about the streets yelling from sheer joy. That couch is the place to tell you," he broke off, and led her back to the heap of velvet cushions she had left.

"Now," she said, "when you've finished grinning and chuckling like a melodramatic villain, perhaps——"

"All right, all right!" He was silent a moment, studying intently the small oval face with its crown of ash-coloured hair. "There are two batches of news. First,



Pavini 'phoned this morning. He's coming to the concert to-night."

"Ah!" She gave a little sigh of pleasure. This meant so much. Pavini, the eccentric, the world-courted, the genius, would hear her play, and the opinion of this master musician was worth more than all the press notices in the universe. For Valerie Marshall loved her art for art's sake. As a pianist of growing repute she already enjoyed the first whispers of fame. Agents were beginning to offer big fees, and among those who knew, her name gathered favourable comment. But these things came as incidentals. The inward urge, the appeal of music to her soul, counted as all. She lived to play, not played to live.

"You're satisfied?" asked West, watching eagerly.

"More than that, Graham. You can't think what this means to me." She smiled at him gratefully. "Isn't it wonderfully lucky you should have met him during the War? He's almost unapproachable, you know."

He nodded. "Rather. Well, I suppose that's one good turn up to the Army. Can't imagine that funny little captain I met on the Italian front being a sort of emperor of music. All he talked about was the advance on the Piave and the excellence of some tinned sausages my batman turned out! Didn't think he'd remember me after all this time. Still, it was worth sending a letter when I heard he'd come over here."

"He must have had happy memories of the sausages," she said, laughing. "I'm very, very grateful to you, boy. But there's something else. I can see it bubbling out of you. Is the engine——"

"Yes, the engine." His eyes glistened. He leant forward, his hands gripping the arms of the chair until the knuckles showed white. "Val, I've won!"

There was silence. Sometimes, when success leaps suddenly through the welter of struggle, gratitude has no expression. On Valerie Marshall the news acted thus. For three years Graham West had been striving to perfect his invention, every ounce of strength and youthful enthusiasm devoted to the task. One detail, small yet all-important, baffled completion. Sometimes hope loomed mockingly near, only to lure forth further desperate effort and then merge into the gloom of disappointment. Again and again had he hovered on the point of discovery, and known the bitterness

of defeat. And each time despair made its subtle overtures he had turned to Valerie and found fresh heart and new energy. Now the reward.

"Graham," she said at length, quite simply, "I'm too glad to say what I feel, but you understand."

"I know, I know. It was the same with me." He rose and started pacing the room. "It's a great day for us both. I can't quite believe it even now. Yet it's true, true! I'd been working all night with a feeling that something was going to happen. When I found I'd won, I couldn't realise it at first. But it's answered every test, and the metal wouldn't striate if you ran the engine for a fortnight non-stop." He swung round and faced her. "I'm rich, just think of it!" Then he laughed nervously and moistened his lips. "Val, dear——"

A shadow crossed the girl's face. She stared at the carpet, wondering what to say. She knew quite well what was to follow.

"I've wanted you, wanted you terribly. Before, I dared not speak. What right had a penniless inventor to ask any girl to share his poverty? But now—oh, Val, you'll marry me, won't you?"

She drew him down to her side and began to speak patiently, gently. "You'll hate me at first. I can't help it, Graham. My career isn't merely a thing of concerts and money-making. There is more behind it than that. Something tells me I must develop my gift, work it out to the utmost. And——"

"What do you mean?" he interrupted sharply.

"Simply this, boy. A woman cannot do her best in two spheres at once. If she is married, her home must come first."

"Then——" He could say no more, but stared at her, white-faced, incredulous. In the hush that followed, his breathing sounded painfully uneven.

At last she spoke, and her voice was infinitely tender. "Don't look like that, Graham. You know I love you, and always shall. But can't you understand? It's the lure of music plucking at my heart-strings, and I must respond. Oh, boy, I must!"

"So—you won't—have me?" The words came out slowly, as if he still failed to realise what this meant. The shock of refusal, crushing in its unexpectedness, had dazed him.

"Can't you see?" she asked, her mouth



quivering. "Suppose I ask you to wait—years? Surely love can stand the test?"

"Wait? Five years, ten years? Oh, Val, why rob us both? We're young, at the best time of our lives. Youth is everything, everything, I tell you!" He was keyed up now, pleading with every nerve. "A day at our age is worth a week ten years hence. Have I got to starve my love, watch myself get older, prosaic, lose all the vital glory of the twenties, just because of music?" A tinge of bitterness had crept into his voice.

She gazed unseeing at the amber walls, the ebony furniture with its gleaming reflections. The stab she had been forced to deliver hurt her as much as it did him.

"Perhaps I'm selfish. But look at it from the other point of view. Imagine you had the choice of remaining single and carving a career, or marrying me—and abandoning your invention?"

He bent his head.

"Be honest. Don't answer on the impulse. Which would you do?"

"I don't know," he said huskily. "But that's not the point. A woman's place is the home. Marriage was made in Heaven. You've got to admit it. Each home is a little kingdom in its way, with the woman as queen. And while she rules, the husband gathers the resources to keep the kingdom going. It's the same right through. Take the birds and the animals——"

She shook her head wistfully. "A man's argument. There are dozens of things I could say against it. But I won't. Argument would only hurt. Just remember this. If you love, you can wait. Love is sacrifice."

Then the blank despair on his face stirred the maternal instinct in her. She slipped an arm around his shoulders and began to stroke his hair with her slim fingers—magic fingers some reporter had called them.

"Listen, boy!"

Gradually her pleading took effect. The first bitterness wore away, leaving him with an unspoken yearning that moved her to the depths. If only she could soften the pain! Came the dawn of a faint comfort. Her eyes brightened.

"Graham, you've always said fair play's a jewel. Very well. I'll leave this in the lap of the gods."

Warm hope returned. Lips parted, he waited eagerly.

"Pavini hears me to-night. If he says I have—great promise, then I must go on with my career. If not"—she leant forward

and kissed him—"if not, you doleful boy, I'll marry you at once."

"You mean it?" He started up, his face glowing. "You're a perfect little sport!" His mouth drooped again. "But he's certain to say you're a genius. You are. I know you are." He kicked viciously at a cushion.

The strain over, she laughed gaily. "He's pettish to-day, isn't he? Nobody knows what Pavini is going to say, so surely my suggestion is fair enough?"

"I suppose so," he admitted grudgingly. "Then smile and forget all about our troubles. I've promised, and I'll keep my word. You absurd boy, as if I didn't care!"

"Doesn't seem like it."

"Hush! We're going to talk about something else now—your invention. I shall come and see it to-morrow."

Skilfully she led him back from his despondency to an animated lecture on the perfect engine.

\* \* \* \*

Ten-thirty the next morning found Graham West at work in his flat—four stories to climb, but compensating, as he was wont to explain, by its nearness to Heaven. Valerie had played magnificently at the concert, and every fresh outburst of applause sounded as a knell to his hopes. Of course Pavini's dictum would be final. He had put in appearance at the hall for a little while, then succumbed to his usual temperamental restlessness and vanished without a word. But it was pretty easy to guess what his verdict would be. And the thought brought a shadow to West's eyes. Without Valerie success had no savour.

On a large table in the corner stood a full-sized working model of his engine. He walked across and looked down at it lovingly. Soon, when the new metal plates he had invented were in position, the outcome of three years' grinding effort would be ready for market. A great creation, certain to bring heavy reward.

"But what's the good of it?" he said slowly. "Without Val—ah!" He caught his breath. Disappointment is at its sharpest in youth.

He scanned the faded room, the washed-out paper and nondescript furniture. How many times had he conjured up the ideal home, the house of sunlight and charm he and Val would share when the penniless days were ended? Now, with wealth near his grasp, it seemed that the dream must fade. Pavini could not help but praise her



to the skies, and then—well, he might live and grow old here for all he cared.

She was coming at eleven to see the engine and hear about the precious formula that had ensured completion. He must meet her cheerily and try to hide his feelings. After all, he could see her point of view, though never, never could he agree with it.

A distant knock disturbed his reverie. Probably the post. He went down the four flights, and came back unsteadily, a letter in his hand. On the envelope showed the crest of the Hotel Regent. Pavini was staying there.

Very still he sat, staring at what he held, afraid to look inside. The minutes sped by, and he could not nerve himself to face the ordeal.

"Read it, you fool," said Courage.

"But suppose——" Fear gave wavering suggestion.

He braced himself, slit the envelope, and read. A half smile came to his lips, hesitated, vanished. Two maddening desires warred with each other, and the conflict was bitter.

"My God!" he whispered, and suddenly looked very old.

If only those haunting voices would cease! If only he could forget that insistent prompting! It would be so simple.

Val had said: "Love is sacrifice." But——

A shiver ran through him. It was hard, hard.

"Love is sacrifice," he muttered, "love is sacrifice. Why should it be?"

The bell outside rang sharply. Valerie! She was waiting below. And she would ask about Pavini. Certain to be her first question.

The lines of his jaw hardened. He took the letter between thumb and finger, started to tear it across—changed his mind, crumpled the paper into a tight ball. This must be burnt; no possibility of a trace left. Where to put it—the waste-paper basket? No, too risky. His pocket? He might forget. Always careless, absent-minded.

Again the bell rang, sounding an impatient note. He leant across the table, picked up a foolscap envelope and thrust the letter inside. Safe there until he was alone, burning it to ashes that gave no evidence.

"I thought you must be in bed," she said laughingly, as he opened the door.

"No, only thinking." He must have

time—time to compose a message from Pavini that would ring true.

"What did you think of the concert?"

He lowered his eyes. "You were wonderful."

"You'd say that if I'd played fifty false notes." Her smile gave place to a certain tension about the mouth. "But about Pavini?"

"He went early, Val. Dare say he'll write later." He thanked the Fates they were on the stairs, the girl leading. If she had seen his face——

"I wonder what he'll say? Oh, boy"—she turned to him swiftly and grasped his hands—"you mustn't worry. I know you can't quite understand. But I *do* care, and——"

"Yes, it's all right," he said awkwardly, and forced a smile. "Until Pavini writes, we'll forget. Now come and watch the West Lightweight Engine perform her tricks."

He closed the study door, went across to his engine and pressed a button. There came a quiet throbbing, smooth and even, as glistening cogs began to revolve.

"Electric starter," he explained. "She runs very sweetly, but you'd notice a sort of harshness in an hour or so. That's where my new metal plates come in—they make her perfect. By Jove, they've taken some inventing!" The light of enthusiasm sparkled in his eyes. "Look at this, Val." He produced a sheet of paper literally black with writing and figures. "The formula—pressures, temperatures, quantities, and so on. Funny, isn't it, to think this little slip's worth thousands and thousands?"

She examined it with a pretty wrinkling of her brows. "It's Greek to me. But what a marvellous boy you are! Can't imagine how people think these things out. I suppose you'll have it typed, and copies made?"

"What!" He caught her in his arms with a great laugh. "Dear little innocent, that's the very last thing in the world I should do! Duplicates are dangerous. Suppose somebody else got hold of one—an engineer, say. Why, he could cut in ahead of me. Don't forget, it's not patented yet."

"Oh, I see." She looked at the paper with round eyes, then handed it to him. "I feel too frightened to hold it, Graham. Please lock it up very, very safely."

"Trust me, Val. I'm not likely to forget, seeing that it represents all my dreams, the



nicest house money can buy, a wonderful garden, and——”

She knew why he had stopped, and her face was troubled. “Don’t,” she said pleadingly. “I’m beginning to feel a selfish little beast. But, honestly, I can’t help myself. There’s a stronger influence at work, and I can’t resist. It isn’t as if I wanted music just for the career it offers.” She made a gesture, half supplication, half apology. “Pavini’s opinion *must* decide, so——”

“I understand.” He patted her shoulder comfortingly. “It was my fault. I’m sorry.” And then, mortally afraid of the conversation, he brought it back to the safer subject of the engine.

Watching him while he explained, she studied his flushed face and shining eyes. He was brave, amazingly brave. First, all the disappointment of those struggling years, now the likelihood of losing her to



“The opening door.”

a stronger claimant—music. Yet he bore it well.

A wave of tenderness stole over her. If only there were some means of preserving his happiness! For the first and last time in her life Valerie almost hated music. She felt so utterly enslaved.

The sound of a faint



rat-tat from below broke in upon his discourse.

"Some wretched caller," he said.  
"Let 'em go away."

But the visitor continued to bang.

"Confound it! Suppose I'd better go down and see. Excuse me a minute, dear." He hurried off to the interminable stairs, leaving her standing by the engine.

"Dear old Graham!" she said to herself. "What *can* I do? If——"

Above the running of the machinery a queer rustle caught her ear, an uncertain sound, as if a mouse scurried near-by. She looked around the study, saw nothing.

"Funny," she thought idly.  
"Can't be the engine." She leant forward—and found the cause.

An envelope, big, distended, had been caught in the sucking draught from the engine and was whirling between

pounding mass. She pulled it down, and the speed increased.

"Graham! Graham!" she shrieked. Not for her to know that four flights muted her cries, and he heard nothing.

If only she had a stick—anything to slip between those grinding jaws of steel!

There were her hands—her sacred fingers.

In a short second a dozen fleeting



"Oh, I'm glad, glad!" she whispered fervently.

two cogs. With each revolution a thin strip came off, to be chewed and mangled by the machinery.

A foolscap envelope. One she recognised. Realisation flashed down like hideous lightning. It was Graham's precious formula, being shredded into useless pulp.

Wildly she prodded at it with a pen. It was too short, failed to reach through the whirling machinery.

"Graham!" she cried. "Graham! Come up! Oh, quickly, quickly!"

Perhaps that lever would stop the



terrors assailed her. Her fingers! What if they were crushed, maimed? But there was no other way, and if Graham lost this formula — Her right hand hovered over the machinery for a moment. "I can't," she gasped, "I can't!"

Strangely, out of the hot clamour of panic, rose her words of yesterday: "Love is sacrifice."

Shuddering but resolute, she plunged her hand down. Something caught her fingers savagely, stabbed at the flesh, pierced the knuckles. Gasping, she gave a wrench, tore her hand free, dragged out the envelope. Triumph banished pain. Unconscious of her hurt, she extracted the mangled paper and spread it out. A typed line leapt to her eyes.

"MY DEAR FRIEND WEST,—

"I attended Miss Marshall's concert last night—"

A chord in her brain seemed to snap. She stared at the letter, at her wounded right hand, at the letter again.

"I attended Miss Marshall's concert last night—"

Footsteps. Graham was outside, turning the handle. Half swooning, she thrust the letter into her pocket. The door opened. He stood there a second, the envelope—the one containing the formula—gripped in his hand.

"I say, Val—— Good God!"

Before he could move, she swayed. Then blackness came down upon her with a rush.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dull, monotonous buzz began to subside. Faint sounds detached themselves, grew louder, took form. Out of the wearisome mist semi-consciousness returned, and with it memory. Vaguely she groped among fragments of thought.

There had been the engine working. . . . The envelope. . . . Her hand caught in the crushing steel. . . . And then the formula, which was not a formula. How could that be? Was it all a dream? Ah, no, she remembered now—the letter!

"I attended Miss Marshall's concert last night—"

Graham had lied. Why? And the answer came without effort.

For a space the pain of shattered faith ruled out all else. Then her wincing mind commenced to seek some excuse, some reason that might palliate the treachery.

Graham loved her. Whatever his guilt, the fact remained. He was young, vitally

in love, and the thought of losing her must have been gall. Besides, he had been looking ahead all these years, striving with pathetic eagerness to wring success from the world, not for himself, for her.

"All's fair in love and war." Perhaps so. Yet this thing he had done seemed so utterly divorced from decent manhood. A woman might have had the same temptation, succumbed, and been forgiven. Women were different. What was just petty in a woman might become unbearable in a man. There lay the sharp distinction, never to be broken down. Even supposing love should let her forgive, it could not make her forget.

She opened her eyes to sunlight and stared around. Primrose walls, pale grey furniture, a great silver flower-bowl on the pedestal in the corner. Her own bedroom. How long——

The pain in her right hand dispelled conjecture. She moved it slowly, and someone came across to the bed.

"Good!" said a soothing voice. Two penetrating eyes stared down at her, and she recognised them—her own doctor, old Morrison.

"How are you, Miss Marshall? Feeling better now, eh? You've been unconscious over an hour. But we'll soon have you right." Despite his cheerful smile, she discerned the sympathy behind, and knew at once. He was thinking of her hand. Well, she had courage enough to face the truth.

"Yes," she said steadily, "it was more shock than anything." Her eyes were fixed on his. "I want the truth, please, doctor. My hand——"

"Tut, tut, don't worry yourself. The fingers are cut, and a deal of skin abraded, but——"

"I want the truth, please," she repeated quietly, and something in her tone warned him.

"Very well." He looked away, tapping an uncertain tattoo with his nails on the bedpost. "A tendon has been severed. Of course we can repair the damage. There won't be even a scar left. But as to your playing—the future must decide."

"I see." She controlled herself and nodded.

"At present I can't prophesy much either way. But in the meanwhile, my dear young lady, please don't brood." The doctor's smile returned. "You're quite well otherwise, you know. And there's



somebody waiting below in desperate anxiety—a Mr. West. Shall I——”

“No,” she said. “I don’t want to see him—yet.”

A tendon severed. What chance had her fingers of recovering their magic? The mockery of it all! She had risked sacrifice of her career with the thought of saving Graham, only to discover the very secret that condemned him. Rescue of that fatal envelope had cost her all she held most dear.

“Doctor,” she said tonelessly, “would you mind bringing me that coat—the one on the chair?”

He passed it to her. She slipped her left hand into the pocket and drew out the crumpled letter. A bitter jest to read Pavini’s forecast of success and know it must be refuted! It would only hurt still more, but——

She flattened out the paper against the sheets.

“MY DEAR FRIEND WEST,—

“I attended Miss Marshall’s concert last night. A pianist of ability—but yes, with nimble fingers, much technique, true sympathy of interpretation. She is dear to you, I understand. Yet music demands truth, and I must speak as I think. Genius commands more than the gifts I mention.

Genius commands complete slavery to itself, oblivion to other issues, ruthless selfishness of the soul. And I see in Miss Marshall the woman first, the musician afterwards. Believe me, I read character better than music; that is why I am great. Thus will the lady reach minor heights, and no further. . . .”

The doctor, watching casually, saw the dawning glory in her eyes, the marvellous sweetness of her smile, and silently wondered.

“Please,” she said at length, and her voice trembled with the happiness it held, “would you ask—Mr. West to come up?”

“Certainly.” He bowed, smiled to himself, and went out.

“Love is sacrifice.” Valerie Marshall nodded, her joyous eyes brimming. How cruelly had she misjudged, reading that one line! Instead of the treachery she had imagined, here was sublime self-denial. To spare her from the cold, relentless truth, Graham had thrown away his certain chance of happiness. Even now, unaware of her discovery, he was probably composing some imaginary and highly-coloured message from Pavini. She looked at her bandaged hand.

“Oh, I’m glad, glad!” she whispered fervently, and turned her radiant face to the opening door.

## S O N G.

**I** WILL be young and glad again:

There never has been a bluer sky  
Following after sweeter rain,  
And never yet has a gusty night  
Left more ecstasy and delight.

Bees are loud in the orchard zones,  
Fields a-quake with sharpened song  
And the cropping of sheep by little stones;  
And, oh, the laughter of hidden dells  
Turning water to golden bells!

I will be young and glad and gay:  
There never has been a grander heaven  
On the spires of a fairer day,  
And never yet has the old world spun  
To sweeter promise and benison.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.



# OLD HAPPY

By MICHAEL KENT

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HATHERELL

AT the end of the long straight road two miles out of Bishopstone, and just on the edge of the village of Wickey, sat the house of Solomon Geary—Old Happy. It sat because, since in Elizabethan days it had started life as quite the last word in cottages, it had grown tired of three centuries of frost and snow and flood and marryings and burying. In Georgian times, when folk grew finicking, some temporary servant of the house had thrown out a scullery, which now made a very good bench for its old back. Here and there the bricks had squeezed and huddled downhill at the ends where the walls had dropped from the solidier masses of the chimney stack. Later, when it was æsthetic to love ivy, forgetting what a vampire jade she is, folk had strapped the old house up with great hairy stems of the plant, that clung and fondled and sucked the marrow from its bones. Along the ragged roof-tree you could count each joist under the mossy tiles.

A dozen generations had worn the threshold of the back door hollow—the back, but not the front. The front was almost virgin straight and sharp. That was because one only went that way to church, to church on Sundays or on great occasions in the week, to be carried there breast-high to the font, to walk out gallantly in prime to the altar and come back with a bride, or later to go forth riding shoulder high and not come back at all.

Solomon Geary had assisted at all those great occasions, and now abode his last outgoing in the house where he was born.

A pleasant place for waiting. At the back the garden sloped to Wych stream. In front the road through Wickey to the sea curved, so that it swept beneath one end of the house and provided him with a three-cornered patch of garden in front of his door. Old Happy could remember when the coaches ran, to the chime of jingling swingle-bar, down the slope of

Wych bridge, with a slim guard, scarlet-clad, shrilling his cry through a yard of gleaming brass to warn the ostlers at “The Bear and Key” where the Flying Wonder flew. Gay times!

But Solomon did not deplore their passing. “If ’tain’t one thing, ’tis another,” he would say. “Life’s kind and warm. We got a seat in the front row, me an’ Jess, an’ see the show for nothing, folk toddling an’ growing spry an’ getting mated—springtide an’ reaping an’ all.”

That was old Solomon’s philosophy. Jess, be it known, went on four legs. Her ancestry was of the bluest, but somewhat mixed. The expert eye might trace lordly collie and studious sheep-dog and faithful Airedale therein. But her heart was in the right place—that is, in Old Happy’s keeping.

The little man had been a carpenter. There wasn’t a house in Wickey—ay, or Wickford either—which had not some of his craft. The bit of cunning beadwork in the rood screen, to fill the gap the worm had eaten, is his. Experts say it shows a master’s hand, but it was no artist, only old Sol Geary, though like as not the original craftsman, whose blood, maybe, was in his veins, stayed his hand and eye.

Nowadays, with right hand curved for ever to a haft grip, he peddles postcards to the folk in charabancs, or sells his eggs and garden stuff, a bright-eyed little wiry man, clean-shaved, ruttled about the cheeks with humour, his voice on foggy days whistling and piping in its sound, his brow clouded in grey.

“Picsher p.c.s, ladies and gents, views of happy Wickey an’ the surrounding hobjects. Happy Wickey! We’re all happy here—leastways, there’s me. Thank you, sirs.”

If you stayed by old Sol and forbore to ask too closely about postcards, which would be as good as saying, “Get on with your job,” you’d feel the heart of all Wickey beating close beside your own.



II.

ON Thursday mornings, at twenty past eleven, Mr. Croucher was wont to cross Wych bridge in a silk hat, a smooth black overcoat, and carrying an umbrella. He came to collect rents in Wickford. Anyone in Bishopstone or Wickey could tell you so much. Most people, too, would chance the theory that he walked because the 'bus fare from St. George's was threepence. He himself would explain his custom on the grounds of his sedentary mode of life and the value of judicious exercise. He was an estate agent in High Street, Bishopstone, and the people's warden at St. George's.

If Old Happy were in his front garden, he would say heartily: "A fine bright morning, Mr. Croucher."

Mr. Croucher would return a considered "Very fine, Solomon," and pass unpausing on.

The report that ran of him in Wickford was unlovely. "If it's a matter of a new grate or a slate or two to keep the weather out, you may talk till you're blue in the face."

Wickford wives are capable of that feat, and their verdict as seen above is glowing tribute to the agent's fixity of purpose.

But on one such Thursday morning a most extraordinary thing happened. Old Happy was in his front garden. The day did not promise well, but he was not the man to make much of that. He saw the silk hat come over the bridge. "A dull morning, Mr. Croucher, but it'll brighten."

"Very dull, Solomon," said Mr. Croucher, and stopped. He stood leaning on his umbrella and looking over the hedge, a thing unprecedented.

Old Happy did not know what to make of it. Was Mr. Croucher ill? Or could he want some eggs? If so, did he intend to take them back in his top hat?

The old man gazed for quarter of a minute, turning these questions over in his mind, then, "You don't want to buy some nice young cabbage plants?" suggested he.

"No," returned Mr. Croucher, gravely rubbing his nose. "This is a handy little place you've got here, Solomon."

"It just about does for me an' the old gal," agreed Solomon, and came wondering to the gate.

"The old gal?" asked Mr. Croucher with surprise.

"Come, lass!" called Solomon quietly, and the dog padded up, eager for orders.

Old Happy introduced her. Jess put her forepaws on the top bar of the gate and

started to wag her collie tail at the stranger. Mr. Croucher considered it foolishness. The wag ceased quickly. With a little sudden shiver Jess sat down and looked pleadingly at her master.

The estate agent got back to his subject. "Quite a nice place, Solomon, but near the river. It's bad for your rheumatics."

"Time'll have a cure for that, I reckon," returned Solomon.

Mr. Croucher shook his head. "It's no place for anyone who is getting on," he remarked severely. He undid the elastic band of his umbrella, shook it out as though he were annoyed with it, and re-rolled it with thin white fingers purpling round the nails, a hand with something leech-like about it. "I've rather a fancy for this bit of land, Solomon. I suppose you are not thinking of selling?"

The proposal caught Old Happy like a gust of wind. "Sell?" said he. "Sell? Old Jess an' me's terr'ble content. Where'd we go, mister? What'd we do?"

The estate agent laughed. "You'd have the money to go with," he argued. "It's not much of a place, but I've a fancy for it. I'd go to three hundred. It's a very little bit of land for three hundred pounds."

That made Old Happy angry. "Not much of a place!" "A very little bit of land!" This was invasion, confident, complacent invasion. The old man flushed. The silver mist of hair began to bristle.

"You be off," said he, "mister or no mister. Gearys hold their own. Don't we, Jess?"

Jess shivered.

Mr. Croucher showed no dismay. He stepped back into the path. "Of course," he said, "the idea is strange, but three hundred's a good figure. I shouldn't be too quick. Think what you could do with three hundred pounds, Solomon. Good day to you."

For a week or more Old Happy chuckled at the thought of Mr. Croucher. "Come to buy us up, that's what he was after, Jess. Don't it just make you laugh!"

The old chap even made a point of being out in front for three Thursdays running.

"A rare fine morning, Mr. Croucher," he would announce heartily.

"Very rare," Mr. Croucher would agree sourly, with his eye on the end of the street.

Then one day, while Old Happy was dibbling in young cabbage plants, and the old gal doing sentry go along the lines to approve the straight setting, a two-seater



came over the bridge and stopped. At the end of the row the old man, straightening his back, glanced over the hedge and saw the car. Its occupants were busy with tripods, not unlike cameras.

"One of these here moving picshers," said Old Happy. "They're going to put us in a moving picsher. You an' me in a moving picsher—think of that, ol' gal!"

Chuckling, he walked with the deliberate heavy tread of a gardener, that crushes no good green thing, up to the apex of his triangular garden.

"Taking photos?" he asked.

For ten seconds the two young

"Think of that, now!" said Old Happy placidly. "An' there's me an' Jess. I'm out of the straight, too." He nodded his head genially. "Ah, young sirs, put a

"Think what you could do with three hundred pounds, Solomon. Good day to you."

W. HATHORN

men paid no heed, then one turned. "Do you know that that chimney of yours is ten degrees out of straight?" he asked.

straight-edge up agin anything what's been used in the world near four-score years, you'll find it warping. Them





bricks has been up a sight longer than that."

"A sight too long," said one of the young men, picking at the mortar with a penknife.

"Settle down!" said one. "She'll topple over soon." And, snapping up their apparatus, they went their way churlishly.

It left Old Happy disturbed. "Topple over!" he repeated with contempt. "Our house ain't agoing to topple over, is it, old gal?"

The old gal was wise.  
She made no reply.



"'You be off,' said he, mister or no mister. Gearys hold their own."

"You're a couple of inches down at this corner."

"Ah," said Old Happy, "we all settle down." He showed more placidity than his visitors.

Next day came a letter, official, vexing, as all official matters were, to Solomon. The house, he gathered, was dangerous, and a rubber stamped name, which he could not read, warned him that under the authority Cap. something, Geo. something else, section and sub-section, all complete and quite



incomprehensible, if the matter were not redressed——

Being "Gov'ment" it frightened Old Happy. By dint of re-reading he gathered what was sufficiently terrifying—that the chimney stack had to be rebuilt to the satisfaction of the district surveyor.

Building? How could he start building at his time of life? It wasn't natural. Gov'ment might have known. Couldn't a man do what he liked with his own?

A call at the surveyor's office in Bishopstone showed that he could not. "If we're forced to do the work, Mr. Geary, we shall have to recover from you. After all, what does it amount to? Sixty pounds would cover it."

Gov'ment did not reveal where Old Happy was to find his sixty pounds.

He tramped home, much nearer to toppling than his own chimney, no longer Old Happy at all. And before his shrunken fire, bloodless in the glow of the late March sun, with old Jess at his feet, restless from a sense of his misdeed, cuddling his boots with an attempt at silent comfort, he faced a bleak to-morrow.

It had never been his wont to ask help. Sixty pounds seemed as far out of his reach as six thousand. What was to be done? Suppose he took no notice? He'd land in gaol as like as not. Old Happy had never heard of mortgages, and if he had, the unfamiliar word would probably have frightened him.

The good days past loomed up in memory—gay chaffer with holiday folk on the road over the postcards, a journey into Bishopstone with eggs when the hens were laying, and coming back with five—ah, maybe six or eight—shillings in hand, as proud as a popinjay. Glad labour in the garden, Jess. He pushed with his heavy boot the shaggy cape of the old gal's shoulders. "They can't never take you, old gal!"

Near to the bone as life had been, it had given him all he asked, something to have joy in, someone to gossip with, someone, maybe, to lend a hand to, if need were. It made no great tax upon his little strength. He could grow old—Old Happy nearing eighty had felt sure that he could grow old—and never come to want.

But want had come to him. Law! What business had law meddling with honest folk?

Over his lonely supper a great thought dawned on him. Mr. Croucher would give him three hundred pounds for the cottage

and garden. He stopped amazed, his broad rough thumb clamping the morsel of bread and cheese upon his jack-knife on the way to his mouth, his eye on the grandfather clock which his grandfather's grandfather had built. Why, he'd have his sixty pounds and a lot left over! A mortal lot. Why hadn't he thought of that before?

"We'll master 'em!" he cried, and proffered Jess the crimson rind of cheese. "We'll keep upsides with 'em, old gal."

It was a long time before he saw that he'd have no cottage to repair. That foolishness put another idea into his head. It was better to have three hundred pounds in hand than a debt of sixty pounds to pay. Suppose he sold the place and took a room in Wickey? He'd have to leave the furniture behind. Old Happy took that thought to bed with him. In the dark, with the restless old gal sitting up to lodge her muzzle on the crazy counterpane, he found that his heart was set, not on the house or ground—there was good brown earth a plenty to be had—but on chairs and tables, bookshelves and pictures and such, that were a history of the House of Geary. "They'd not fetch much," muttered Old Happy in the dark, fingering the counterpane. He touched a smooth diamond of the pattern, and knew it for part of his wife's wedding dress, and a round patch—his coarse fingers fumbled for the edge of feather stitching in the dark—that was a part of a coat which his son had left behind when he went sojering.

*Mentem mortalia tangunt.*

Still, while one was living was the need to live. "Why, with three hundred pounds," said he to Jess, "we'll live—lodgings an' all—four year, an' after that we'll see."

That was Thursday morning, and he waited for the top hat of Mr. Croucher. Would he renew the offer?

Perhaps he had thought better of it. Perhaps, if it had got out that Solomon was being forced to sell, he would beat the price down. Perhaps—Ah, there he was!

Mr. Croucher, no more quickly, no more slowly than in the past twenty years, was crossing Wych bridge.

"A—a grey and doubtful day, Mr. Croucher, sir." There was a little quaver in the old man's voice.

"Very grey and doubtful," agreed Mr. Croucher.

He did not stop. He was going by. He had forgotten all about his offer. The old man almost ran to the gate.

"Hi, Mr. Croucher, hi!"



The estate agent turned coldly. "Did you call, Geary?"

"I've turned it over in my mind, sir. I'll sell."

"For three hundred pounds?" asked Mr. Croucher.

"That's it," said the old man eagerly. "Three hundred pounds down."

Mr. Croucher nodded. "You shall have it to-morrow. I'll get a conveyance—paper, you know, to say it was yours and you've sold it to me. I'll come out in the afternoon. Good day, Geary."

Just that. It might have been an affair of cabbages. It was Old Happy's heart.

But the old man made brave to be content. He came back proudly to Jess. "That's roof an' bit an' sup for four years, old gal, an' then why, Heaven knows, it might be elm wood for me an' a house with ne'er a window."

But the next morning a little devil of conscience bit him. When Mr. Croucher had made his offer he never knew about the expense that the house was going to be. Suppose he should find out and withdraw?

Old Happy whispered it in the old gal's ear. "We must keep that dark, ol' lady, the strict q.t."

But there, when Mr. Croucher came in the afternoon, all Solomon's speculations were knocked, as he put it, "crooked and caterwise like the way home from the fair!"

"There's the deed, Solomon. You set your name there beside the little red wafer."

Solomon took pen in hand and put his tongue out, due preparation for the art of writing.

"Here?" he asked.

Mr. Croucher laughed. Few ever heard Mr. Croucher laugh. It was like air being pressed spasmodically out of a bladder.

"Why," said he, "you haven't read it!" He tapped the child Solomon gravely on the knee and talked to him like an elder. "Never, under any circumstances whatsoever, set your name to a document which you have not read deliberately. It is the first principle of business."

So Solomon, having adjusted his spectacles read deliberately—he could do no other—and aloud in the same way as he read the psalms on Sunday, four syllables behind the rest of the congregation, but resolved on staying the course. Having read it, he turned appealing eyes on Mr. Croucher and asked him what it was all about. Of necessity he took the buyer's word, so the need for reading is not altogether apparent,

but Solomon thought it was very kind of Mr. Croucher, and went on with his signing. Thereon the notes were counted.

"I shan't be doing anything with the place for a month or two, Solomon," said the agent at last, "and you needn't worry till I want it."

"Meaning, sir," queried Solomon, "as I can stay for a bit?"

"The greater part of the summer, probably."

That hit Solomon's heart. Here was he, keen and grasping skinflint that he was, darkly keeping back from Mr. Croucher that burden of rebuilding which was on the owner of that house. He grew red. His voice faltered. His hands fumbled and his feet shuffled.

"Mr. Croucher, sir," said he, "I've done amiss. I never ought to done it."

"Rubbish!" said Mr. Croucher sharply. "You've signed. A bargain's a bargain."

"But the land ain't wuth it," explained Old Happy. "The owner's got to spend a mort of money setting the chimney straight, as Gov'ment says. I'd fain have let you take it without a word, on'y you bin so kind, reading it over an' letting me stay on an' all. I just can't, an' there's the end of it!" He counted out six ten-pound notes, which he handed back to the agent. "That's all it's wuth. Can you take it like that, Mr. Croucher, sir, an' say no more about it?"

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Croucher angrily. He was unaccustomed to the use of strong language. He got up from his place and walked to the little diamond-paned window, frowning at the orderly stretch of seeded ground. He was plainly angry at something, and was not disposed to regard Solomon with favour.

At last he came back to the table and counted out lingeringly three of the ten-pound notes which Solomon had handed him. "Suppose we divide the difference," he said slowly. "I shall pull the house down later on, and if the surveyor knows that, he won't be so anxious. I can arrange it with him. Take those thirty pounds back. I don't want to be hard."

Thirty pieces of gold!

The old man took the notes and stood up. "I am beholden," said he, "more than words can say for your goodness an' loving kindness to me." He turned to Jess. "We can stay on, maybe, for months, old——" The old voice broke.

"Say no more about it," said the agent



rather sharply. Old Happy was in no case to do so. "If you take my advice, you'll put that money in the bank."

Mr. Croucher jammed on his hat, buttoned his overcoat, and gathered his papers as though he were extremely annoyed with somebody.

Half-way down to the gate Solomon arrived at revelation. "Moving out means selling the things, sir," he explained. "I couldn't take them with me, an' selling, when it comes, it'll be a wrench, sir, it'll be a wrench. God bless you, Mr. Croucher!"

"Yes, yes, yes," said Mr. Croucher, and positively ran away from him.

### III.

SOLOMON was grateful to Mr. Croucher. That dry, hard, clockwork man had given him heart's blood—leave to live as he had done with his old loved memories round him and green things in the good brown earth to tend. He could shake his conveyance in the face of "Gov'ment" now!

Bishopstone is two good miles away. It is all of two and a half to St. George's. That is five on the double journey. Solomon began to do it pretty well once a week.

The first week it was eggs. One and nine a dozen old Solomon could have got for them in the shops—two and three retail—but he took two dozen up to St. George's.

He went to the side-door in Iron Bar Lane. Could he have a word with Mr. Croucher?

Mr. Croucher, according to the maid, was at the office. Would Mrs. Croucher do?

He touched a white forelock to Mrs. Croucher. "If you'll accept of 'em, sir, ma'am"—Old Happy, having rehearsed his words all along the road, found adjustment difficult—"for your merciful goodness—that is, your good man's—sir, Mrs. Croucher, I ought to say. They're as fresh as daisies, bein' but laid since Sunday, an' honoured to do so, for there's little I can repay, sir, ma'am."

"We enjoy fresh eggs. One can't be sure of them in the shops," said Mrs. Croucher, who was as precise and self-contained as her husband. "I thank you very much."

"Not thanks, ma'am." Old Happy warded them off with a gnarled hand. "It's no more'n right. The gentleman has been mortal kind to me." He slung basket, called to Jess, and trudged off abruptly.

When Mrs. Croucher's good man came in to tea, he was not as pleased as he might

have been. "It was only a business transaction," he said irritably. "I wish the silly old man would view it as such." One can be too modest.

"Albert," said the lady, "is that the piece of land of which you spoke last week—the piece by the bridge you bought in Wickey?"

"It is," said he.

"Oh!" Mrs. Croucher paused to fill a cup. "Well, a couple of dozen eggs aren't much. I do hope he won't come again."

Mrs. Croucher was an optimist.

Old Happy called next Wednesday with some seekale. It was early closing day, and Albert had devoted it to his pass-book and mental arithmetic. He closed the book when he saw the old man at the cobbled entry and stamped out angrily to speak to him before the maid could get to the door.

"Look here, Geary——," he began.

"Seekale," said Old Happy proudly. "White as milk it is. There ain't none better in all Wickey."

He had set the basket in the doorway while he stood a yard back, with one open hand indicating it, and his face all composed of satisfied pride in his offering and reverence for his benefactor. "If you'll only accept of 'em, sir, bein' as they're grown on your land——"

Albert Croucher put his hand into his pocket, and Old Happy looked more grieved that if he'd made a fist of it. "I pulled them heads of kale out of the fulness of me 'cart," he said.

The agent withdrew his hand empty and took up the basket. "You mustn't do this sort of thing, Solomon, you really mustn't. That little bargain of ours is concluded. All the same, I thank you, thank you very much." Mr. Croucher did not look grateful. "I'll bring the basket back in a minute, if you'll sit down in the hall."

Later on, when his good lady saw the seekale, she eyed her spouse with some disfavour, although she admitted a partiality for the vegetable.

"As a business man, Albert," she said, "I have no doubt that you are very successful."

Albert found the remark not entirely complimentary. He suspected *arrière pensée*. "Perhaps, Annabel," said he, by way of apology, "you will think more kindly of me next November, when you'll be mayoress of Bishopstone and riding in your car."



However, that is no affair of ours.

Next week Old Happy brought in a "roaster," pride of his chicken run, plucked and singed and decently carrying a fair liver under one wing. Mrs. Croucher thought he was a dear old man. His gratitude," said she, "does *him* great credit."

Albert remarked that this is a world where each must do the best he can for himself, and he had read that in the speech of an eminent man and an ex-Lord Chancellor, so it must be honourable dealing.

"Sniff," said Mrs. Croucher for the ex-Lord Chancellor

It was between three and four months after the sale that the culmination of this history arrived. For a fortnight Old Happy had left them undisturbed by his gratitude. Then he arrived one night in full summer, pushing a truck upon which lay something shrouded and coffin-shaped.

Albert was out. Mrs. Croucher came to the door.

The old man looked triumphant. "Mrs. Croucher, ma'am," said he, "I reckon I pretty well managed it now, trying to keep upsides with Mr. Croucher's goodness." He turned to the truck, beckoning her. "I got to move," he said, "got to move at last. That's three good months of life in the old house with the old things about me more'n I could have reckoned on, all due to Mr. Croucher. Yes'day he sent me a letter to say he was sorry, but he wanted the land, an' I got to move."

"I'm so sorry," said Mrs. Croucher. "Have you anywhere to go, Old Happy?"

The corners of the old mouth dragged down, but puckered up again bravely in a grin. "Thank you kindly, ma'am," he said. "What you can't put down you must put up with. But what I says to myself, ma'am, is this. I got to sell my traps. Can't take 'em to lodgings. Clutter up too much. Now, thinks I, I ain't got level with the master for the thirty pound he let me off—after me trying to keep it dark about the chimney an' all. So I says, there's my grandfather's grandfather's clock. We used to set much store by it, an' some folks, maybe, would like it." He drew aside the pall and revealed the brass face of the ancient timepiece, turned unnaturally to the summer sky.

"Mr. Geary," cried the woman, "we couldn't think of it! I forbid you to—"

"To what, Annabel?" Albert Croucher, arriving home and hearing voices at the side-door, had come to investigate.

"Albert," cried Mrs. Croucher, "mayoress or no mayoress, I'll wash my hands of this! It's a sin and a shame!" She put hands on hips and regarded her lord and master with immeasurable scorn. "What are you going to do about it?"

Old Happy was not troubled by any of these things. He did not understand them. He did know that he had come to present a timepiece to his honoured benefactor, and he got on with the job.

"They all got to be sold," he explained. "This'd have to be sold, but I'd liefer give it you. I'd liefer feel that it was in the hands of a kind an' honest an' an upright gentleman, churchwarden of this parish an' a credit to his birthplace." It had taken Old Happy quite a time to learn that bit off by heart. He had recited it to Jess over and over again.

The credit to his birthplace listened to it for a moment with anger, and then his face suddenly drained of blood and left him looking wan and thin.

"Come in," he said in a very small voice. "I have something to say to you, Solomon Geary."

The three went into a small and tidy library set around with shelves and agleam with polished wood. "Sit down, Mr. Geary," said Albert Croucher, and pointed to the one easy-chair by the hearth.

He himself stood at the opposite end of the table, somehow in the manner of one who pleaded at a bar.

"When I bought your land, Solomon, I knew that the expansion of the East Brant railway to Wickford would involve the building of a railway station upon it, and that the project was planned and would soon be carried out. So I knew that the value of your piece was a great deal, a very great deal, more than you thought. Further, since you did not want to sell, I set the surveyor on to you to give you a scare. The reason why I have had to tell you to go now is because it was sold to the railway company yesterday for two thousand five hundred pounds. I took a mean advantage of you, Solomon Geary. I think that the knowledge which I had ought to be valued, but will you accept as a fair price half the profits of the sale?"

"Well done, Bertie!" said Mrs. Croucher.

Albert, who for many years had not been called Bertie, smiled at her. "You'll not be



mayoress, Nan," said he, "nor ride in your car this November."

"Who cares for that?" said Nan.

The old man sat hunched forward in his chair with wild, worried, childlike eyes looking wonderingly from one to the other of those two. "Asking pardon, sir," said he, "but if it's more you're giving me, I can't never do it. I'm spry an' hearty, but I'm getting on an' time runs quickly now. I'll never fare to pay your goodness back."

And Nan went to him, telling him patiently, as a mother would a child, how there was no question of giving, how all he was to receive was rightly his, while on the other side Albert explained that there were houses on his books such as the old man would love, a mile nearer Bishopstone, on high, dry ground, and big enough to provide good householding for him and Jess.

"Ah," said Solomon, "I'm glad you said Jess, sir. I thought you never liked the old gal, an' she's all I've got. You can't

understand that, sir. You've got your good lady, an' you're young."

Nan looked at Bert and Bertie looked at Nan. The same thought came to both. "We're younger than we were," they said.

\* \* \* \* \*

They fed cheerily together, and then Old Happy, with his truck, set out, disdaining help. "An easy road home," said he. "All sweet and easy now."

And what he spoke was indeed most true.

Linked unwontedly arm-in-arm, they stood in the porch, looking after him as he passed in the gathering dark, because of a virtue in him that had healed them both of an evil which had crept a long age on them, though they knew it not.

"A little child shall lead them," murmured Nan, and she hardly knew why those words came to her.

And as they stood there it seemed to them that in the figure of Old Happy they watched the Little Child passing homeward down the lane.



## REFLECTED LIGHT.

**W**E watched the sun reluctant die  
In one great flame of dusky rose  
Across the stretch of western sky.  
Where the high-flooded river flows,  
Mirror'd like fire, reflections lie.

Slowly in wonder, wave on wave,  
Ebbing the sun at last slow set:  
But still the quiet waters gave  
Back colours iridescent yet,  
Telling of that rose-splendid grave.

So from our life when beauty dies,  
Leaving us most forlorn,  
Still deep within there vivid lies  
Vision of memory born,  
As magic of the sunset skies  
On the flood's breast long worn.

EDITH DART.





EDWARD RAY WITH HIS CLUBS.

# MY FAVOURITE CLUB

## THE NIBLICK

By EDWARD RAY

EX-OPEN CHAMPION, BRITISH AND AMERICAN

*Photographs by Sport & General*

**I**F I were asked what is my favourite golf club, I should unhesitatingly answer "The niblick." Many golfers will ask why that should be so, especially in view of the prowess which I am supposed to command with the driver, and also in spite of the fact that I have laid it down that the drive is the most important of all shots. Some say that the approach is the most important shot in all golf; some say that the second is the most material item; but I cannot get away from the conviction

that when you have played a good drive, you have paved the way towards good subsequent play. But at the same time I am bound to confess to a feeling of delight when out of a bad lie I use my niblick, and then see my ball soaring through the air and coming to rest just by the pin, or, perhaps, dropping just in front of the green and within nice pitching distance. Yes, I have a genuine enthusiasm when I feel the balance of the niblick in my hands.

Possibly I have here provoked a grimace



in some quarters, and very possibly I have provoked the remark: "Yes, and a good job Ray possesses a niblick." But to that I would answer in the same terms in which I indulged once when some professional friends were indulging in the gentle art of "leg-pulling" at my expense, and also at the expense of my weakness for the niblick.

in a bunker and desirous of getting clear of a forbidding bunker face, what do you employ? Perhaps you are situate in a marshy sort of plot, what have you to resort to? Why, the niblick every time, and in a multitude of other instances. If ever there was a utilitarian club in the ordinary golfer's bag, then that club assuredly is the niblick.

With a certain amount of natural glee I well recall an occasion at Muirfield, in 1912, when I used my niblick in the round in which I won the Open Championship. I had pushed my tee shot at such a vital point as eight holes from home. I did not find too good a lie, and, to add to my perplexity for the moment, I beheld a bunker between myself and the green. You who have never been through the ordeal will in all probability not appreciate the awful nerve tension which is involved in the playing of the concluding stages of an Open Championship, especially when you are within measurable reach of success. It is an experience not to be envied. But on that occasion I took my favourite niblick in my grasp, and my faithful club stood me in such good stead that I felt as comfortable for the Championship as a man could feel with his ball in mid-air and the crown of victory more than half a dozen holes off.

For the moderate niblick shot, your position should not to a great extent differ from that which you would take up if you were about to play your mashie, though



ADDRESSING THE BALL.

I confuted and confounded all by reminding them that the end justified the means, and, after all, to my mind it does not matter a great deal what a man does *en route*, so long as he is on the green in the allotted two.

Now, just consider for the moment where the niblick comes in. Be you in a rough grassy lie, what do you call for? Be you

it has to be borne in mind first and last that the niblick has much more loft than has the mashie. It naturally follows that the niblick has to have more force imparted to make up for the length which is lost on account of the lack of straightness in the face of the club. In fact, one can with advantage employ almost fifty per cent.





TOP OF SWING.

more vigour in the case of the niblick than in the case of the mashie.

Very often the golfer will find it advisable to use his niblick when another club would spell disaster to him. Take, for instance, the player confronted with the green, the latter being surrounded by ugly-looking bunkers on the player's side of it. Play a mashie in such circumstances, and almost assuredly you will foul the top of one of the hazards. Yet, if you have reasonable confidence, you can with impunity use the niblick, pitch high in the air, and bring your ball "thwack" down on the green beside the much-coveted hole, the back-spin which the face of the niblick has imparted having "dragged" it up short.

But the niblick is not the club to use in a half-hearted manner. Never start wondering whether it will or will not do what is required. Remember that you have a vast amount of air to play into, and, after all, the ordinary green is of fair dimensions. Incidentally, I am a firm believer in the theory that the fewer the obstacles between yourself and the pin, the better your chances of success. All the time that your ball is in the air, it is free from obstacles, and in the atmosphere you have only one calculation to make, whereas by playing the run-up you must in the ordinary course encounter at least half a dozen undulations and other little worries.

The most important of the "don'ts" I



FINISH OF SWING.



can mention here, is not to be over-lavish in the swing. Remember that the ordinary niblick is a fairly sturdy fellow, and also remember that the risk of going too far beyond the hole is considerably less when using the niblick than when using any other club. The loft in the face will save a lot of run when once the ball has landed.

When playing a fairly long shot with the club, you must alter your stance as compared with that which you would adopt in the case of an approach in other circumstances and with another club. The left foot should be drawn back a trifle, so as to "open up" the avenue as between yourself at the green. Turn the face of the club out slightly to your right, and that will counter any tendency which you may feel towards pulling your essay.

Keep a rather confined swing, and in playing the shot with the niblick let the club go out from you a trifle, and at the same time give its swing a fair proportion

of the upright. Do not be afraid of taking turf. Provided the ordinary etiquette of the course is observed, there can be no possible harm in your scooping away a couple of inches of earth.

I myself am very much inclined to favour the fairly large-bladed niblick, and, within reason, the larger the face, the smaller the margin for error. Have a good healthy club, and do not be afraid to come down close to the ball, simultaneously bringing it across the ball.

Devote yourself to the use of this club as a hobby sometimes, and in all probability you will find that the time you have spent in so doing will have been profitably spent. I am not here going into the sphere of use of the niblick in lofting stymies and in other little trick ways. Take my advice that the niblick is at least one of the greatest pals you have with you on the course, and don't forget that he is a long-suffering fellow by reason of his strong construction.



## THESE INCONCEIVABLE FAIR DAYS.

**B**Y all of beauty I have known,  
By all I keep of clever ways,  
I will uplift my heart to hold  
These inconceivable fair days.

As a red cup is lifted up  
To be o'er-brimmed with rare bright wine,  
These birds, these blossoms, they shall press  
Into the vintage that is mine.

So at a time when thirsting is,  
And no fruit hangs upon the tree,  
My fellow-men may haply turn  
With eager mouth to drink of me.

That I may pay my dear debt back  
For all these hours of white and gold,  
Give of my heart's wide stream and keep  
Proud draughts to drink till I am old.

A. NEWBERRY CHOYCE.





"Sprawling on the ground."

# THE DOG AND THE DEAN

By ROGER HOWDEN

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

THE city slums stretched right up to the cathedral railings. They were tall, high railings, with the bars very close together; robber-proof, even boy-proof, they stood menacingly all round the cathedral precincts and seemed to glower at the surrounding streets, as who should say, "Thus far and no further." The broad flight of steps up to the main entrance of the building and the big open door invited the presence of all mankind, but at the sides of the steps and all round the graveyard the railings prohibited entry save to the elect, the dignitaries and servants of the cathedral, who were furnished with keys of the small narrow gates set here and there among the bars. From the graveyard the great grey walls of the edifice

rose slowly, towered mightily, and finally soared heavenwards in a mass of delicate spires. Beneath them the teeming life of the city flowed on ceaselessly and heedlessly, its members eating or starving, buying and selling, drinking and shouting, making love or beating their wives, as the case might be. The cathedral took little notice of them, and they took no notice whatever of the cathedral.

One sunny morning, as the bell was ringing for matins, the Dean emerged from his deanery, which stood over the way, surrounded by a high wall, and bent his steps towards the small gate in the railings by which he was wont to take a short cut to the robing room. He was a man of portly and pleasant aspect; his rotund face was



full of affection for his fellow-creatures ; he had the forehead of an artist, but the mouth and chin of a determined man—in fact, he was a gentleman eminently suited to the dignity of his office and to dealing with the sordid lives which surrounded his comfortable house. This morning he had had a good breakfast and a short pipe, and was well prepared for his first task of conducting daily prayer in his beloved church. The spring sun caught the light grey stone and picked out the delicacy of the spires ; the dark branches of the trees in the graveyard, bursting into tiny leaf, were etched against the paleness of the walls in exquisite tracery. The Dean raised his eyes, and as he contemplated them he came to his almost daily conclusion that the cathedral was one of the most beautiful things in the world, and he proceeded to walk towards it dreamily, like Johnny-head-in-air.

His contemplation was rudely cut short by the sensation that a large and well-directed football had caught him in the pit of the stomach. He made a violent effort to retain his balance, and clutched the missile. It proved to be the head of a small boy, attached, as he gradually discovered, to a body not noteworthy for its cleanliness. In fact, the complete person of a very ragged and dirty small boy, running swiftly with head down, had cannoned full into the Dean's ample cassock just below the belt.

"My gracious !" said the Dean, when he had recovered breath enough to say anything.

Then he observed that his victim was weeping copiously, the tears making clean rivers down his grimy cheeks.

"My little man," continued the Dean, "why are you in such a hurry, and why do you cry ? Are you hurt ?"

But the boy, with an extra squeal of anguish, wriggled between the Dean's outstretched legs and vanished, still sobbing, round the corner.

"Poor child !" mused the good man. "If he had not been in such a hurry, I would have had time to get out a penny. Very few childish griefs cannot be soothed by a penny."

He felt over his cassock carefully, and, coming to the conclusion that no permanent damage had taken place beneath it, he straightened his hat, drew himself together, and went on towards the gate, which he unlocked and locked again behind him.

As he approached the robing room door, a low growl close to his feet made him look down sharply. At the edge of the path, among the graves, there sat a dog—a large yellow mongrel, with one ear up and the other down, and a huge dry bone between his paws.

"My goodness gracious !" said the Dean, feeling that two shocks in one morning were too much. He stared at the dog. "Now, how on earth did that creature get in here ?"

The dog looked up at him and smiled ; his doggy eyes grew soft and misty, and his one cocked ear lay flat with the other.

"Good dog !" said the Dean in a propitiatory manner. He was fond of animals.

The dog's whip of a tail thumped against a tombstone.

"You can't stay here, you know, old boy," continued the Dean. "You must come out."

At the admonitory tone the dog ceased to smile, but he did not move.

"Come, now ! Out you go !"

A low growl was the only reply, and as the Dean advanced a step, the low growl became a venomous snarl. The Dean's gaiters were well-cut, and he had no desire that their delicate curves should be marred. He walked back to the gate, unlocked it again, and tried exhortation from a safe distance.

"Here, boy ! Here, Towser—or whatever your name is. Good dog ! Come along. Here, Towser !"

Towser smiled again, but did not move. Just then the bell stopped, and the Dean hurriedly locked the gate again and made for the robing room.

"Bother the brute ! Now I'm late."

He hastened into the cathedral and up the steps, but by the time he got his portly person arrayed in his vestments, the Vicar, the verger, and the choir were all waiting with a marked air of martyrdom, and the organist's extemporisation on A was growing irritable.

The Dean was upset, and of all things in the world he disliked that most. He could hardly keep his mind on the service. The bruise on his frontispiece was quite painful, and he could not make out how the dog had got into the graveyard. Some carelessness of the sexton's. He must speak to him about it. Meanwhile these wandering thoughts must be controlled.

After service was over he apologised to the Vicar.



"I'm sorry I was late, Thornton, but I was detained by a slight accident, and by the fact that I was trying to get a dog out of the churchyard. I can't imagine how the brute got in. Maxwell must have left the gate open." He called to a passing choir boy. "Tell Maxwell to come up and speak to me, please."

The sexton entered a few moments later, with an air of surprise.

"That gate, Maxwell," said the Dean severely, "I wonder how many times I have tried to impress upon you that the robing room gate—in fact, all the churchyard gates—*must* be kept locked."

"Please, sir, if they was unlocked, it wasn't me as unlocked 'em."

The Dean turned to the Vicar.

"Did you come in by that gate this morning, Mr. Thornton?"

"No, Mr. Dean."

"You see, Maxwell," said the Dean triumphantly, "it is useless to try to lay the blame on others. My orders must be carried out, and if you wish to remain here you must see that they *are* carried out."

"But I locked the gate, sir, after evensong yesterday, and I never opened it since."

"Was there a large yellow dog and a bone—and a bone, Maxwell—in the churchyard after evensong?"

"Not that I noticed, sir."

"Well, both are there now. How do you account for that?"

"Perhaps he got in through the railings," ventured Mr. Thornton.

"A glance at the size of the dog and a comparison with the size of the aperture between the railings makes that theory extremely doubtful, Thornton."

"Maybe, sir, 'e slipped hin between your legs like, w'en you was a-comin' hin just now," suggested Maxwell, with some venom.

The Dean's temper rose.

"Nothing of the kind! Am I a perfect fool? The dog is quite a large dog, and he has got a large bone. The main point at present is that he must be got out. Kindly go down and put him out at once, Maxwell."

The sexton withdrew, and the Dean and the Vicar sat down to discuss the business of the week. In about twenty minutes Maxwell returned, dishevelled, with a crimson spot on either cheek-bone.

"Please, sir, I can't budge that brute no'ow."

"Oh, nonsense, Maxwell! He must be got out."

"I called 'im and whistled 'im and chirruped to 'im, sir, and then I went for 'im—and look at me!" He held out a leg with a ragged trail of trouser swinging from the ankle. "I can't get 'im out, sir, and I won't—not if it costs me my place. 'E's mad, that's wot 'e is. 'Yderaphobia is a norrible death, sir. No place is worth it."

"Really, Maxwell," said the Dean, "I never heard anything so ridiculous in my life. Mr. Thornton, I wonder if you would very kindly see what you can do."

"With pleasure. I don't imagine it will prove a very difficult task," said Mr. Thornton, with a withering glance at the sexton.

The Dean shut the door, applied his attention to the music list, and then began upon his official correspondence. He had answered several letters, when Mr. Thornton burst into the room in a state of rage.

"I never saw anything like that brute!" he gasped. "I'm sorry, Dean, but I must confess I cannot get him out. It's most ridiculous, as you said."

The Dean stood up.

"It's not only ridiculous," he said, "it's perfectly preposterous! I'll put him out myself."

The dog was sitting near his original place, but his eye was more wary and his carriage more tense. The Dean strode past him and opened the gate. Then he came back and advanced upon Towser in righteous wrath.

"Get out of that, sir!" he cried, and aimed a kick at his ribs.

Towser snapped up his bone and with an astute movement withdrew from the orbit of the Dean's foot. The Dean got behind him, and by a series of well-aimed kicks drove him, in a corresponding series of astute withdrawals, towards the open gate. But when he had arrived there, Towser made a sudden frontal attack on his own account, and dashed furiously back to the robing room door, catching in the Dean's legs as he went and upsetting him completely. Sprawling on the ground, the Dean's temper rose to boiling-point. He scrambled to his feet, dashed after Towser, and, flinging caution to the winds, swooped and made a grab at the scruff of his neck. Towser liked that. He began to see some humour in the situation, and with a gay bark he snapped up his bone again and rushed away, curvetting about the graves in lively circles.

"You brute!" shouted the Dean, entirely



forgetting himself. "I'll be even with you yet!"

After that the chase developed into a game of catch-who-catch can, which Towser thoroughly enjoyed. He was several points to the good both in years and training; he not only won easily,



"I rather think," said the Dean, "that I have made this young gentleman's acquaintance before."

but was sufficiently vulgar to brag about his victory, tearing up and down long after the Dean was too blown to move, and even having the effrontery to whirl in circles on the flat surface of an old tombstone, chasing his own tail. Then



he picked up his bone, carried it to within a few feet of the angry prelate, dropped it,

"I acknowledge that I have failed," he confessed. "I think the only thing to do is to wait till the dog gets hungry, and then he will probably be more amenable and easy to entice with food."

"Bless you, sir, I offered 'im a crust of bread at the beginning, and 'e wouldn't so much as look at it. 'E's mad, sir, that's wot 'e is. They never heats w'en they're mad, so I've been told."



"The light of the policeman's lantern revealed a very grimy old-looking little boy in the stern grip of the law."

and gazed expectantly at him with a beaming grin, the saliva dripping from his mouth.

"Half time!" he said as plainly as possible. "Come on, old sport, and have another whack at it!"

But the Dean was defeated. He turned bitterly back to the robing room, mopping his head and breathing hard. He called Maxwell and Mr. Thornton.

"Well, leave him alone for the present. I can waste no more time. I have to attend a committee meeting immediately."

"I think the water's hot in the lavatory," said Mr. Thornton suggestively.

"Dear me," said the Dean, "I didn't think I looked as bad as that! This is most upsetting."

At evensong the Dean went fearfully from



the gate to the robing room, but saw no sign of Towser. With a sigh of relief he attended wholeheartedly to the service, and hurried home, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

Next morning he got a letter.

DEAR SIR,—

You are doubtless unaware that there is a poor starving dog in the cathedral churchyard. I do not know how he got in, but it is obvious that he cannot get out. I take the liberty of drawing your attention to the fact, as I know your love of animals from the prominent part you take at the meetings of the N.S.P.C.A. I did not see the poor creature till I came out at evensong, and as it was then so late, I got him some food and made him up a little bed in the north porch. I may say that I should not have done such a thing except for the fact that the sex'on refused to open the gate and put the poor beast out. He said it was kept shut by your orders, so, for fear of getting him into trouble, I adopted the other course. You will not get this till morning, but may I hope that you will then hasten to liberate the prisoner?

Yours faithfully,

ROSETTA CLARKE.

"This fool of a woman has fed the brute now!" said the Dean despairingly. "That has queered the pitch for the present."

He was a very busy man, and his outside duties called him away from the cathedral all that day. On the following morning he got another letter, marked "Urgent."

DEAR SIR,—

I went to service to-day, and to my horror I saw that the dog was *still there*. Did you not get my first letter? It is terrible to think of the desperate cruelty that goes on in a Christian country. It was quite impossible for me to say my prayers while thinking of the sufferings of that poor dumb animal. Dear Mr. Dean, I feel sure that my letter must have miscarried. I *implore* you to take immediate action to release the starving dog which is locked in the churchyard.

Yours in great anxiety,

ROSETTA CLARKE.

The Dean thereupon took up his pen.

DEAR MADAM,—

I have made several efforts to remove the dog from the churchyard, but as long as foolish women persist in the mistaken kindness of enticing him to stay there with gifts of

food, beds, etc., I can proceed no further in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

JOHN DUDGEON, Dn.

Next morning another missive arrived.

DEAR SIR,—

I quite fail to understand your letter. The poor dog is slowly starving to *death*! The little scraps of food I bring him are not sufficient to sustain life in such a large animal. With very great regret I have communicated with the police and the N.S.P.C.A. As regards your attitude in the matter, I cannot trust myself to speak. Suffice it to say that I shall *never again* be able to attend the services at the dear cathedral, since it is necessary for my soul that I should be ministered to by a man who makes *some* effort to live according to the faith he preaches.

Yours truly,

ROSETTA CLARKE.

The Dean sighed.

"I wonder why a cathedral always attracts madwomen?" he said, and flung the letter into the fire.

In spite of the lady's protests, however, he noticed her slipping down the aisle after evensong, carrying a basket containing a moist piece of liver.

Next day a burly constable called at the Deanery.

"Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Dean, sir, but I have orders to remove a starving animal from the cathedral churchyard. I should be much obliged for your leave to have the gate opened."

The Dean handed him a key.

"Bring it back when you're done, and see that no one else gets in while the gate is open." He glanced at the clock, which pointed to eleven a.m. "I have a dinner engagement at seven o'clock this evening. If I am out when you come back, leave the key with the butler."

The constable stared.

"I shall return with it in a few moments, sir."

"Oh, will you?" said the Dean. "There is a vulgar expression, constable, of which I do not generally make use, but at present it seems to me to fit the case—'I don't think!'"

The constable departed with offended dignity in every line of his back.

During the afternoon the key was returned, and the butler brought it to the Dean.

"What did the constable say, Perkins?"



"Well, sir, I shouldn't like to repeat it, sir. I prefer to keep my lips clean from the grosser forms of swearing, sir."

"Did he catch the dog?"

"I gathered that he did not, sir."

When the Dean got back from his dinner-party it was nearly midnight. He slipped into the churchyard and went round to the north porch. By the light of a match he saw Towser nestling sleepily in a box filled with hay, presumably provided by Miss Clarke; by the side of it was a bowl of water and a plate containing some licked scraps of bread and liver. The dog opened an eye at the light and winked at the Dean.

"You're a wonderful dog, Towser, and I must confess that if I were as well attended to, I should be equally loth to leave. Good night, old boy, and pleasant dreams."

As the Dean passed through the gate, it seemed to him that a small black shadow sprang up from underneath his feet and flew away round the corner.

"Now, what was that? What on earth—— I am perfectly sober. Lord Riverdale's dinner was very good, but still I know I am perfectly sober. An optical illusion of some kind. Most extraordinary!"

Easter was approaching on the fifteenth of April, and next morning the Dean settled down to his Easter sermon. He had hardly begun when the door opened and Mr. Thornton was ushered in, looking agitated.

"What now?" said the Dean irritably.

"About that dog——"

"Good Heavens!" cried the Dean. "Am I never to have two minutes' peace from that wretched dog? Really, Thornton, with Holy Week coming on, I have more to do——"

"I'm sorry, but the matter is urgent. The police are convinced that there is something behind all this. They are of opinion that the dog must have been put into the churchyard by someone who opened the gate with a key. It is obvious that the dog cannot get through, under, or over the railings. In that case someone must have a duplicate key, and will probably make use of it for the purpose of robbing the cathedral."

The Dean thought of the black shadow of the previous night.

"This is serious, Thornton."

"Yes, Dean. The police seemed suspicious of Maxwell, but, as I told them, Maxwell has endless opportunities for theft of a much simpler nature, and he has had

such a lot of trouble about the dog already."

"Of course it's absurd to suspect Maxwell. But it might be as well to set a watch. I fancied last night that I saw something—— I couldn't be sure, though."

"Did you? Well, now, perhaps there is something in it. The constable says he will secrete himself in the north porch to-night and see if anyone makes an attempt to enter. Maxwell says he will accompany him. Maxwell is extremely anxious to have the matter investigated."

"Very well. Arrange about it, Thornton. Do anything you like, but, for goodness' sake, let me get on with my sermon."

But the sermon did not progress favourably. The Dean could not get that black shadow out of his head. He worked on late into the night, but finally flung all he had written into the waste-paper basket. Then he rose to his feet with decision, and, equipping himself with an overcoat, a muffler, and a thick stick, he betook himself to the churchyard. He found Towser sleeping comfortably in the north porch, and the police-constable and Maxwell practically invisible in the shadows.

"Seen someone moving outside, sir," whispered Maxwell.

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" muttered the constable.

The three of them waited in tense silence. After a few minutes a small black shadow began creeping almost imperceptibly along the outer side of the railings. A low whistle sounded. Towser sat up in his bed and lifted one ear. The whistle sounded again a little more distinctly. Towser leapt to his feet with a little whimper of delight, scrabbled hastily in the hay for his bone, and made a bee-line for the railings. Arrived there, he elongated his massive frame in the most wonderful manner, squeezed through the bars with apparent ease, and began jumping and slobbering about the black shadow with short howls of ecstasy. The next moment the constable was through the gate. The black shadow made a dash for safety, but was encumbered by the rejoicing Towser, and the light of the policeman's lantern revealed a very grimy old-looking little boy in the stern grip of the law.

"Got him, sir!" shouted the constable triumphantly. "Now, you little varmint, what have you got to say for yourself? Don't know who he is, sir."

"I rather think," said the Dean, very short of breath, "that I have made this



young gentleman's acquaintance before. We met with great suddenness in the street here."

"Well, I never!" said Maxwell.

At sight of the policeman the boy started crying miserably. He clutched the Dean's coat-tail.

"Oh, sir," he wailed, "don't let 'im take 'im off me! I didn't mean no 'arm. I'd pay if I 'ad the money. Honest to God, I would. If 'e takes Towser, I'll die!"

"Well, Hi'm blessed," said Maxwell.

The boy ended in a paroxysm of sobs.

"Now, what can be the meaning of this?" said the Dean.

The constable grunted.

"No tax has been paid on this dog, sir." He turned to the boy. "Hiding him in the churchyard to get off the tax, eh? You can't evade the law like that, young feller." He took out a note-book. "Father's name?"

"'E's dead."

"Mother's, then?"

"She's dead, too."

"Who looks after you, then?"

"No one. On my own I am."

The constable turned to the Dean.

"I shall have to summons the boy himself at that rate, sir."

"Wait a moment," said the Dean. "Is this dog's name *really* Towser?"

"Yes, sir."

"What an extraordinary coincidence!

How did you get him to stay in the churchyard?"

"Put 'im on trust wiv a bone, sir. 'E's a good dawg is Towser." He wiped his nose on the dog's ear, and Towser licked his face delightedly.

"If you will allow me," said the Dean in a husky voice, but in his most courtly manner, "I will settle Towser's debt."

"And costs of the summons, sir," added the constable.

"And costs of the summons," repeated the Dean punctiliously.

The boy looked up sharply.

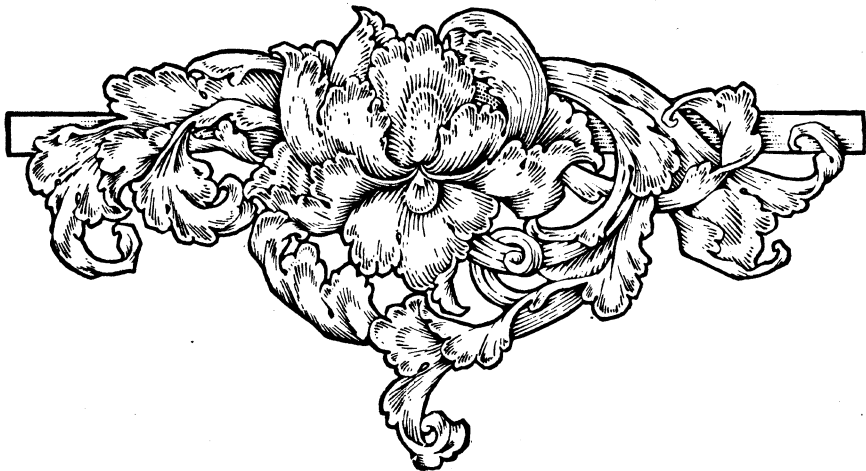
"Does that mean as 'ow you'd own 'im, sir?" His face quivered. "'E wouldn't be 'appy away from me. Rather 'ave 'im done in I would than put 'im w'ere 'e ain't 'appy."

"Well, Hi *ham* blessed!" muttered Maxwell.

"I shall see that Towser will remain your property to the end of his days," said the Dean, "but you are mistaken as to his being unhappy with me. I gave him one of the most delightful mornings he has ever had. Didn't I, Towser?"

"Dirty brute!" said Maxwell.

But dogs are more generous than men. Towser not only waggled and shoved his head under the Dean's outstretched hand; he even paid him the compliment of planting two muddy paws on the very front of his cassock and slobbering over his belt.





# FALSE COLOURS

By N. G. DANIELS

ILLUSTRATED BY WILL LONDON

"GUESS!" said Mrs. Budds tantalisingly when her husband returned home.

"Been bargain hunting?" hazarded Mr. B., with a touch of sarcasm.

"No, dear, something this time for you," his wife resumed graciously.

"Give it up," said Mr. Budds indifferently. "Is supper ready?" He was tired after his long day in the City; besides, he knew his wife's surprises.

"Well," trumped Mrs. Budds, drawing forth a long official-looking envelope, "you've got your allotment."

"What?" said Mr. Budds sharply.

"Your dream," his wife went on proudly, and with a flourish she handed over the precious document.

She knew what it meant to them both. The one shadow on their wedded bliss, the one dark spot on their otherwise spotless little suburban home, was banished. Ever since that romantic summer holiday of hers in Devonshire, when Mr. Budds, torn between his passionate love for his native air and his infatuation for her, had finally yielded to her charms and followed her to London to make a home for her there, she had felt—and been told often enough, too—how the artificiality of town life chafed his soil-hungry soul and thwarted his longing for the open spaces. How often, too, when he was inclined to be intractable, had she gained her point by bringing him round to talk of Devon! Then he would soften as he expounded to her the mysteries of cider-making, pig-fattening, of seed-time and harvest—which didn't matter as long as the new hat upstairs was safe. How proud she was, too, of the reputation he had gained among his associates of the neighbourhood as horticultural expert! He was a man apart, standing out in sharp relief from other women's husbands. She was envied among wives. She knew that from the whispering of malicious tongues when her husband's advice about the manage-

ment of their diminutive back gardens was misunderstood and things failed to grow.

She watched his flushed face as he read on in the intervals between the mouthfuls of steak.

"Isn't it just splendid?" she said, anticipating his opinion. "Your own piece of land, your simple life, and we shan't have to give up London when we retire, either," she added, relieved at the thought.

Mr. Budds frowned rather labouredly. "It's a fraud," he pronounced finally.

"A fraud!" echoed Mrs. Budds incredulously.

"Yes, a fraud. The Council has a waiting list for their allotments. It's some rubbish dump they're trying to stave people off with—before the next election," he added darkly.

"But there's the estate agent's name on the top, and the plan of the field. It's the one above the old allotments, where you and I went on a picnic that Sunday, and you said it reminded you of—"

"I tell you it's a fraud," he interposed doggedly. "I'll have nothing to do with it."

"But, darling," gasped Mrs. Budds tearfully, "I've sent off the money for the shareholder's ticket and the rent of that Number Seven plot next to the hedge." And she placed a delicate appealing forefinger on the neatly-pencilled plan.

Mr. Budds felt the toils closing round him—toils his egotism had woven and which his wife was unconsciously drawing more tightly. The unique position he held among his neighbours as the unfailing oracle on rural matters, a position he prized for the distinctiveness it conferred on his otherwise colourless personality, was in jeopardy. Once his friends, stirred by his tales of the Western country, of the fabulous fruits its soil bore, and the mysteries of their cultivation, had bombarded the local Council with applications for garden plots to put his daring improvisations into practice. But



they had learned that the waiting list was closed, and he had breathed again.

This circular was another matter. Any moment old Gregg and the rest of his cronies might hear of this offer, and then the idol's feet of clay would crumble and he would tumble from his throne. For what did he, Budds, really know or care about the country he had always loathed and so gladly left behind when his wife's

shoulder. At the doorstep stood half a dozen of his simple-life converts, waving joyfully white sheets of paper.

In response to Mrs. Budds' warm bidding they filed into the drawing-room. She was radiant. What a magnet he was! What a lot of trouble Mrs. Gregg and the other women went to in their efforts to attract the men-folk to their gatherings! Yet these same



"They passed through the gate indicated on the plan."

father had yielded to his daughter's tears and made him junior partner in his City building firm?

He must act, and act quickly. "Gimme that letter," he snapped peremptorily, glancing at the fire, "and don't you——"

A knock at the door cut short his utterance. Confused, excited voices sounded outside. Mrs. Budds opened the door. He heard a hoarse voice he barely recognised as Gregg's asking eagerly: "Is your husband in, Mrs. Budds? We want to see him about this new land the Council's taking over."

Mr. Budds peered timidly over his wife's

men would gather round her table just to satisfy their pathetic longing to hear about that wonderful world outside their prison of bricks and mortar. And she had the exquisite joy of feeling privileged to be the one woman present without sufferance on their part. For when they listened enthralled to her husband's eloquence on the subject of mixed farming, champion Drum-heads, Rhode Island Reds, shorthorn bulls



and rabbit poaching, she could nod reminiscently at intervals, and they felt these things interested her, too, if only for old times' sake.

This time, however, she felt they would be better

of gardening tools, a portable tool-shed, a complete stock of seed, and the thousand other requirements necessary for the enterprise, the whole to be left entirely to his valued discretion.

A common fund had been subscribed and an account opened with a local bank. Digging operations, all being well, it had been voted, with one dissident, were to commence on the following Saturday.

"Saturday," groaned Mr. Budds, "and this is Thursday!"

\* \* \*

When Mr. Budds returned from the office the next evening, he seemed abstracted. Mrs. Budds, remembering his explosiveness at breakfast, was cautiously unobtrusive. She was a practical woman. She wanted the

"Come to get a tip or two," said Budds contemptuously.

without her, and discreetly retired to the wardrobe glass upstairs.

\* \* \*

When the little gathering dispersed, Mr. Budds was reading dazedly the initial minutes of a newly-born club, "The Nature Lovers and Gardening Association." The Council's offer, as set forth in the circular, had been more than accepted. It had been decided that the agent acting for the Council should be approached with a view to obtaining the whole field on lease for the seven years specified.

As a mark of the Association's prospective gratitude for this possible concession, a certain sum had been voted—to be forwarded with the application—towards the Council's scheme for a new wing to the local cottage hospital. Thus it was hoped to secure sole possession and safeguard the Association's exclusiveness.

Mr. Gregg was deputed to handle this delicate negotiation. To Mr. Budds was entrusted the purchase of a complete outfit

land project to go forward. She saw possibilities in the scheme beyond fresh vegetables.

"Your slippers, dear?" she suggested softly, when the silent meal was over.

"No, thanks—I'm going out." And he rose quickly and made for the hall again.

Outside he drew forth a long envelope from his pocket and scanned the offending communication for the hundredth time that day: "Applications to be addressed to Samuel Sliphm, Esq., Estate Agent acting for the Council, 3, Boundary Buildings."

"G. JARVIS (Clerk to the Council)."

"Sliphm, 3 Boundary Buildings—that's right," he muttered nervously.

He wondered at the grimy block of slums where he finally ran the name-plate of Samuel Sliphm and Co., Estate Agents, to earth, but he knocked at the dingy door high up in No. 3 with the comforting feeling that he was a total stranger to the neighbourhood. He wondered still more when, in answer to his knock, a sharp-faced, restless-looking gentleman cautiously opened the door; there was an air of improvisation about the scanty office furniture within.

"Eh, Mr. Sliphm——" began Budds.

"That's me," nodded the sharp-faced gentleman gaily, picking up some papers. "Mr. Gregg, I presume. I——"





"My name's Budds," put in the visitor bluntly, "and I want to know if it's true the Council aren't playing the game with those new allotments I see you have the disposal of," he added aggressively. "My wife answered your circular at once, and now we've heard the field's let."

"Not at all," retorted Mr. Sliphm stoutly. "Every applicant——"

"You can cut all that out. What about 'The Nature Lovers and Gardening Association'? Nice little game you and they are having on the public, eh? Well," he went on, "you can keep your plots. I never wanted 'em."

"Of course, if you think——" sneered Mr. Sliphm.

"I don't want plot Number Seven," emphasised Mr. Budds. "I want to buy the field."

"Buy the field!" echoed Mr. Sliphm, staggering backwards.

"Yes, buy it, build on it, blot it out with bricks and mortar. What do we want, in a respectable suburb like this, with cabbage planting and all that rot?"

After all, Samuel Sliphm reflected, it didn't matter to him. His business was to drive the best bargain. "Very good, Mr. Budds," he said, after a slight pause. "There'll be some disappointment among the applicants, but we can't help the Government stepping in over our heads, can we? The country wants houses." And he winked.

"It doesn't want allotments," said Budds, with some heat, "at any rate, suburbs don't."

"Quite right," assented Mr. Sliphm, with a superior air. "They're messy things, and we don't want to add to the number of people who walk about here Sundays, in old clothes and hobnailed boots, carrying shovels."

"Quite right," agreed Mr. Budds. "Now about—er—these other people," he continued darkly. "If I take this field off your hands, saving you and them a lot of trouble, I want—you know what I mean—I—er—desire to remain anonymous," he concluded magnanimously.

"Very good, Mr. Budds. I don't believe in publicity myself. Best to——"

"Ten acres, wasn't it," pursued Mr. Budds, keeping to the point. "Your circular said—— What about the legalities—deeds and all that?"

Samuel Sliphm had not reckoned on the disposal by purchase. He stroked his chin,

He would have to consult his clients, the local Council. "There's the individual applicants to be disposed of, and the Council are very strong on 'The Nature Lovers and Gardening Association' having the lease. This is Friday"—he mused as if pursuing some subtle train of thought—"and the lease is to date from to-morrow." He shook his head doubtfully.

"Never mind them!" cried Mr. Budds desperately. Then his business instinct came to his aid. He drew out his wallet and pressed something substantial into Mr. Sliphm's half-proffered palm. "Put 'em off. That's yours. I'll come round next week and settle up about the field."

"That's the end of 'The Nature Lovers and Gardening Association,'" he reflected, as he walked slowly homewards.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the week, while her husband took his lunch at a City restaurant, Mrs. Budds, feeling the subtleties of her culinary art were wasted upon herself, was in the habit of subsisting until supper-time on curious fragmentary repasts which she consumed in odd places about the house, unless she was lunching out at one of the big emporiums up West.

Saturdays, however, when he returned at noon for the week-end, was her day of reparation. The lunch she would then place before her husband was always of a quality which placed restaurant quick lunches at a disadvantage sufficient to cement him more firmly to the attractions of home.

On this particular Saturday Mrs. Budds was apprehensive. She had returned late from a bargain basement scrimmage, and, moreover, she had been hindered by the arrival of a van-load of gardening implements from the local ironmonger, which now littered the hall and extended nearly to the front gate.

Mrs. Budds brought in the hastily-improvised meal with a glance of misgiving at her husband. "Sorry, dear, I haven't had time to——" she faltered.

"Unpack those tools," he supplemented genially. "Well, there's no need to—they're going back."

"Back!"

"Yes, back," echoed Mr. Budds, with studied concern. "The club's off. We shall have Mr. Gregg round here with a long face at two o'clock—he'll explain why. I told you it was a fraud. You leave these things to me next time," he added, with playful reproach.



His blithe manner puzzled her. He seemed rather relieved than otherwise. He ate the sausage he detested without a murmur. He did not even notice the brown paper parcels she had forgotten, in her hurry, to secrete.

"Here comes Mr. Gregg!" exclaimed Mrs. Budds suddenly, glancing out of the window.

"Poor chap!" muttered Mr. Budds feelingly, going to the door. "He'll be dreadfully disappointed."

But Mr. Gregg seemed in no need of sympathy. "Slipham's a trump!" he cried triumphantly, waving a letter aloft. "Sent me the lease this morning. Put all the others off. The field's ours!"

Mr. Budds' involuntary "Never!" passed unnoticed.

"Ah, the tools have come, I see, and here come the other chaps—all punctual. That's a good omen for the Club. Don't be long," he urged; "we'll unpack the tools."

When Mr. Budds, after donning his oldest suit and thickest pair of boots, descended helplessly to the hall again, his assembled followers raised a little cheer for their chief, and a bright new spade was thrust into his hand. He grasped it mechanically and faintly smiled his acknowledgments.

"You lead," said the energetic Mr. Gregg unselfishly. "Forward the 'N.L.G.A.'!"

Their progress through the Saturday afternoon shopping crowds gave Mr. Budds time to recover some of his mental balance. Something had gone wrong. Mr. Slipham had failed him. Well, he would face the situation, he would brave it out. He would bluff. He would buy a gardening encyclopædia, sit up nights and study it. Yet his heart misgave him. When the outskirts of the suburb were reached and they struck the rough cart-track leading through a litter of building materials to the fields beyond, his disciples crowded round their leader, eager for inspiration as to the multifarious methods of procedure necessary to turn a virgin field into a horticultural paradise.

Frantically Mr. Budds did his best, but he felt that a hundred yards instead of a hundred miles between his theories and their application made all the difference. Under the persistent fire of their detailed questioning he realised that his earthworks, so laboriously built up by years of skilful

extemporising, were rapidly crumbling to dust.

They left the old allotments, now in an advanced stage of cultivation, on their left as they mounted the hill slope. Mr. Budds paused a moment to point out—unconvincingly, he felt—their many defects. Then they plunged through a narrow grove of elms and burst upon their own acquisition. Around the narrow dividing hedge an expectant, curiously silent crowd had gathered, armed with every instrument that figures in a gardening catalogue.

"Come to get a tip or two," said Budds contemptuously, with a shake of the head in the direction of the old allotments. And they passed through the gate indicated on the plan. "There's the tool-shed put up in the corner," said Mr. Budds excitedly, "as advertised."

"Looks more like a cow shelter," corrected one of the club suspiciously. "You don't keep tools in a place with no door."

They began gleefully the work of marking off their holdings. The running fire of sarcasms that began from the hedge was ignored, and when a facetious-looking gentleman stepped gingerly over the hedge and advised them to "'op it while they 'ad the charnst," he was politely but firmly told that he was trespassing. He departed—rather hurriedly, they thought.

Suddenly the snappy fire of jeering comment swelled to a roar worthy of a cup tie crowd at the top of its form. Mr. Budds thought he caught the word "Bull! Bull!" His friends flashed past him, leaping frenziedly for the hedge. Then he felt himself lifted high in the air by a violent blow from behind.

The first thing Mr. Budds knew, when he recovered his senses, was that he was lying in a gap of the hedge, and looking down on the crowd surrounding him was a burly individual in breeches and leggings. "Slipham be hanged," this gentleman was vociferating, "and the Council, too! This is my field. I don't want no Sliphams nor councils to tell I that. If you likes to argue with my bull about it——"

There was a murmur at the back of the crowd. A little white-faced man fought his way into the centre of the throng. "Slipham's gone!" he gasped. "Cleared out—name-plate and all!"

"Thank goodness!" sighed Mr. Budds fervently as he closed his eyes again.





A READER'S TRIBUTE.

ABSENT-MINDED BOOKWORM: Good gracious! Am I cut off by the tide, or am I thinking of one of the stories I've read?

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### THE CONNOISSEUR.

By Theta.

"HULLO!" I said, as soon as I saw the table. "That's a swagger cream jug. Where did you get it?"

"I've had it a long time," said Mary.

"And only just produced it for use. That's like a woman. Who is it you're expecting to call?"

"No one, silly," she replied. "So you like it?"

"Of course. I have always said there's nothing like old silver to lend charm to a table."

"No, you can't examine it just now," she put in hastily. "You'll only upset the cream." And she went on to inquire at what age silver became old.

That is what I like about Mary—she is always willing to encourage me to display my erudition. In my more modest moments, before we were married, I used sometimes to wonder why she ever grew fond of me. Unless she had been misinformed, it was not my wealth, nor could it have been my personal beauty, unless her taste was markedly eccentric. I could only conclude that it was my cultured conversation, and with the laudable intent of retaining as a husband all the attractive characteristics of the lover, I still practise conversation as an art.

"When does silver become old?" she asked.

"When it begins to be sold by the ounce instead of the jug, plate, or cup," I told her, and stared at this particular specimen with the eye of a connoisseur. "What tales it could tell if it could only speak," I went on—"tales of faithful service to all manner of owners! And through it all it has retained a charm that simply cannot fade."

"I'm glad you like it," said Mary.

"Beautiful!" I continued rapturously. "Look at the curve of the handle, look at the lip, look at the *tout ensemble*!"

"Yes, that's the bit I like best of all," she agreed.

"You don't see work like that to-day. That dates from an age when a jug could be a work of art instead of a mere—er—"

"Casualty in the kitchen," she suggested, and started me off on another train of thought.

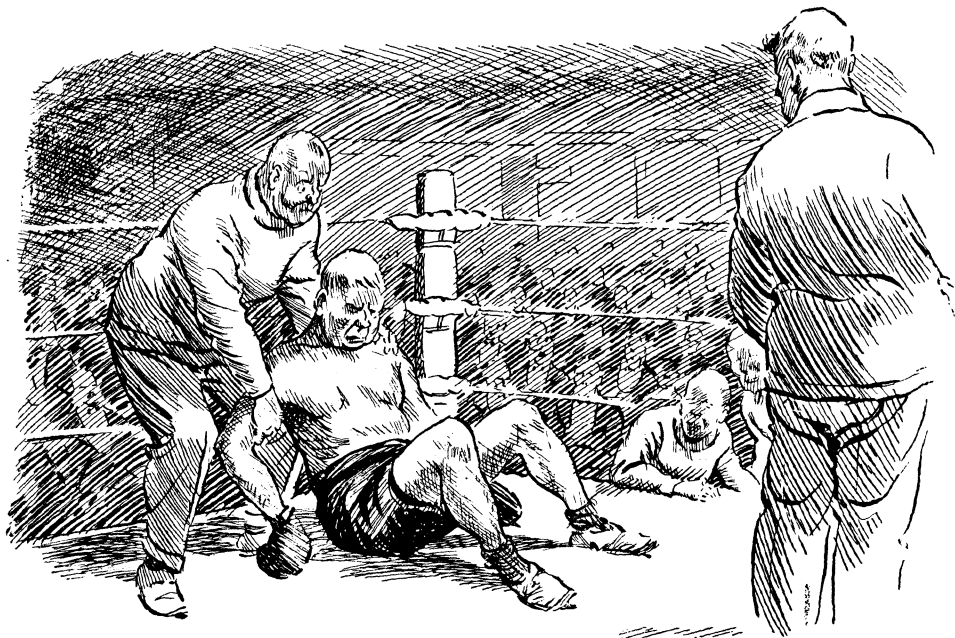
"One can be sure that it's had its share of knocking about, too. And yet look at it! I'll warrant its original owner would have been delighted to wear half as well."

And it was at this point that Thomas and his wife dropped in. The jug caught the lady's eye at once.

"So you've had it done!" she cried. "Doesn't it look sweet?"

And she explained to her husband that, acting on a newspaper household hint, Mary's





*Peter Hasey*

#### COLD COMFORT.

"CHEER up, Jim, you ain't tired yet."

"Yes, I am."

"Nonsense! Taint as if you was on yer feet all the time."



*A. T. SMITH*

#### THE COLLECTOR'S INSTINCT.

"HAVE one, auntie?"

"My dear, I can never bring myself to approve of women's smoking, but if you get a gardening picture which tells how to grow spinach, do keep it for me; and I want the tambourine with a Cupid's dart sticking into it, to bring me good luck."



christening mug, quite useless as it was, had been transformed into a cream jug by the cutting of a lip.



"Is this Madame Pompom?" inquired a man who had climbed several flights of stairs and been admitted into a darkened parlour.

"It is," replied the stately personage whom he addressed.

"The famous clairvoyante and fortune-teller?"

"The same."

"Do you read the mind?"

"With perfect ease."

"Do you foretell the future?"

TEN-YEAR-OLD Mary had a game called "Old Mother Hubbard." Mary was Old Mother Hubbard, the cast-iron canine on the lawn was her dog, and all the tots of the neighbourhood were encouraged to bring the poor dog a bone.

"But the dog can't possibly eat the bones, Mary," suggested her mother.

"No," explained Mary cheerfully. "I sell them to the rag and bone man."



A SHY young hostess, in an effort to be genial, led aside the comparative stranger, whose name somehow eluded her.

"Look," she said, "I've paired you off with



A POOR COMPLIMENT.

HE: Dear, you seem sad.

SHE: Yesterday you called me a nymph of the cornfields.

HE: Well, darling—

SHE: I have looked up "nymph"; it means an *inferior* goddess.

"The future holds no mysteries that I cannot unravel."

"Can you unfold the past?"

"The record of all things past is to me an open book."

"Then," said the caller, feverishly taking from his pocket a handful of silver, "I wish you would tell me what it is that my wife wanted me to bring home, without fail, this evening."



"Do you dance all the latest?"

"No, I was home all day yesterday."

that lady in the corner. Will you take her in to dinner? My husband, naughty man, says she's a bit of an old frump, but she's got lots of money, and one of his clever friends has just married her for it, so we must be nice to her."

"I am sorry, madam," said the guest, "but I am the clever friend in question."



DEAR OLD LADY (at the Wembley Exhibition): Could you tell me what time they feed the Stadium?



## TWO CROWDED HOURS OF LIFE.

*By R. T. Lee.*

BINKS had just left the bank where he worked, and was on his way to Waterloo to catch his train home, when an advertisement in the window of a popular shop caught his eye. He stood looking wistfully into the window. Before his mental gaze there rose visions of indulging in the fashionable hobby of brightening his home by means of this one-and-ninepenny luxury served with his simple supper.

"Two hours," he said to himself, quoting the advertisement. Then he made a rapid mental calculation. "One hour and twenty minutes in the train, and a walk of twenty minutes at the other end, that makes one hour and forty minutes." (These bank clerks are wonderfully quick at figures.) "It's running it pretty fine, but, by Jove, I'll risk it!" he said aloud, as he prepared to enter the shop.

Then he remembered that his train did not leave Waterloo till 6.4, and it was now only 5.30, so that, if he made his purchase now, it would be two hours and fourteen minutes before he got it home. (You see how he worked that out, don't you?)

There was only one way out of the difficulty. He must delay his purchase till the last minute compatible with catching his train in a taxi.

Binks was a poor man. In ordinary circumstances he would no more have thought of taking a taxi than of pogo-ing to the bank in the morning. But this evening he was demoralised by the alluring invitation in the window.

"Why not?" he asked himself, echoing the first words of the advertisement.

The next twenty minutes Binks spent in working out elaborate calculations in time and space on his shirt-cuff (for even a bank clerk's capacity for mental arithmetic has its limitations), and at 5.53 he presented himself at the counter.

Four minutes later he dashed from the shop and bolted up the Strand in search of a taxi. Old gentlemen jumped out of his way, old ladies jumped into his way, small boys cheered, and somebody shouted "Stop thief!" But Binks was as one possessed until, finding a taxi, he sank upon the seat and shouted: "Waterloo as fast as you can!"

He caught his train by three seconds, having paid the taxi-driver two shillings and sixpence to avoid waiting for change.

That train journey was a nightmare to Binks.

At every station he popped his head out and feverishly asked the guard whether they were up to time. But alas, one minute lost at the first stop grew to two and a half minutes at the second, until by the time he reached his own station the train was twelve minutes late.

Flustered and perspiring with anxiety, Binks leapt out and made one more rapid reckoning.

"Five fifty-three and it's now seven fifty-six, twenty minutes' walk equal seven fifty-six. Three minutes too late!"



THE SOURCE OF SUPPLY.

NEW VICAR (after denouncing an ancient local custom): Until I came here I had no idea so much superstition and ignorance still survived in village life.

SON OF THE SOIL: Eh, but when it comes to ignorance, parson, you must remember there's always new people from Lunnon comin' to live 'ere.

By this time Binks was desperate; he counted not the cost. He rushed from the station, calling wildly, "Cab! Cab!" His fellow-townsmen stood in amazement when he jumped into the station cab and demanded of the cabman that he should "Drive like hell!"

The cabman managed to get a lolloping trot out of the protesting funeral horse, but it was



7.48 before Binks reached home. Another two shillings and sixpence to the cabman, and Binks had dashed into the hall, calling for his wife.

"Whatever is the matter?" asked Mrs. Binks with aggravating calmness.

"Quick, quick!" cried Binks. "There's not a moment to lose! Another five minutes—no, four minutes now, and we're too late!"

"Good Heavens, John, what is it?" asked Mrs. B., becoming thoroughly alarmed.

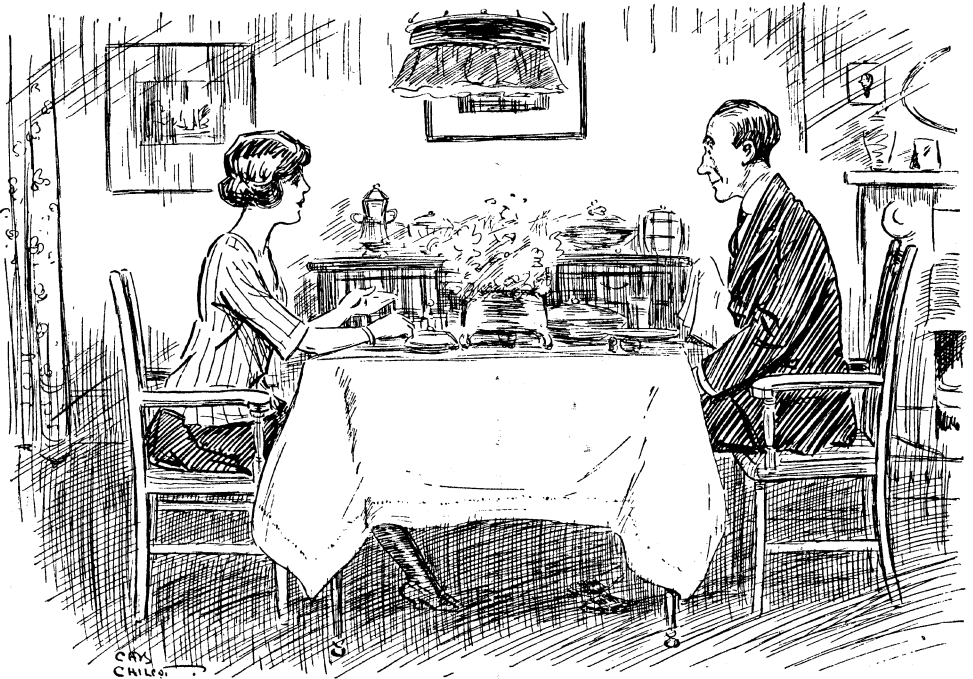
"Don't stand asking questions!" shrieked Binks. "Get plates and spoons! Don't I tell

At a church conference a speaker made a number of disparaging remarks regarding the universities, finally expressing gratification that he himself had not been corrupted by contact with a college.

"Do I understand that the gentleman is thankful for his ignorance?" asked the chairman, righteously indignant.

"Yes," said the other, "if you wish to put it that way."

"Then," continued the chairman, "all I have to say is that you have much to be thankful for."



DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

HE: But don't you cook much more for dinner than we can use, darling?

SHE: Of course, silly! If I didn't, how could I economise by making left-over dishes?

you another three minutes means ruin? And it's cost me six shillings and ninepence already! It's only guaranteed for two hours, and I bought it one hour and fifty-eight minutes ago!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Poor Binks! He did not enjoy his little luxury. In spite of his wife's expostulations, he gulped down his share with feverish haste, under the fixed impression that at 7.53 exactly it would be turned back into a pumpkin, or a white mouse, or a tattered slipper. Perhaps it was the pace at which he ate, or perhaps it was the heat of the soup following on the coldness of the luxury—at any rate, Binks feels now that he has a perfectly adequate reply to the question in that advertisement "Why not take an ice-brick home with you?"

#### TABLOID TRAVEL.

Oh, I've been to the home of the kangaroo,  
And know their ways and the things they do;  
I've seen a cowboy, and had a peep  
At butter-making and shearing sheep.

I'm quite familiar with Burmese swells,  
And know the sound of the temple bells;  
I've visited India's coral strand,  
And dined off codfish in New'oundland.

I've watched New Zealanders freezing lambs,  
And seen Canadian beavers' dams;  
In far Hong Kong I have lunched on rice  
And I've had my tea in the Isle of Spice.

Oi Singapore I have felt the charm,  
And I've wandered about on an ostrich farm;  
But all my travels were done in a day  
At the wonderful show down Wembley way.

R. H. Roberts.



## VERONICA IN TOWN.

*By Ralph Wotherspoon.*

VERONICA returned from taking the dog for a brisk spin in Hyde Park just as I was letting myself out of our select apartments in Half Moon Street. Veronica is my niece, I am her youngish uncle—at least, I like to think so. Veronica is nearly sixteen.

"Where are you going?" she said. "Don't shut the door."

"To the club," I replied. "I have to meet a man."

"For tea?"—half suspiciously.

"I hope so."

"I'll come with you," said my niece graciously. "I've never been inside your club."

"It's out of bounds to flappers," I informed her hastily, "especially to those with red hair."

"What absolute bosh!"

"Not at all—merely one of the rules. Ladies are not allowed."

"In that case," Veronica said thoughtfully. "something must be done about it. Half a mo' till I put the hound away. We shan't want him. Come here, sir."

Our tame Airedale bounded up and was with difficulty decoyed indoors. We then moved off in the direction of Piccadilly, Veronica chatting hard.

"Just tell me why I'm not allowed in your club, will you?" she demanded.

"For one thing, you're not old enough. Also, you are, unfortunately, not of the right sex."

"Meaning I'm not a man?"

"Exactly."

"Well," she said bitterly, "if I was a man and had a club, I shouldn't be afraid of a girl or two in it."

"As a club, we are, not in the least afraid of girls," I replied patiently. "Some of us are even married."

"If I was a man and married," pursued the relentless child, "I shouldn't be so beastly

mean as to belong to a club where I couldn't take my wife."

"Ah!" I said cryptically.

"What would happen if I come in when we get there? Shall I be thrown out?"

"Shown out, I expect."

"I've a good mind to," said my niece thoughtfully. "It'd make a sort of scandal, and the committee would be frightfully peeved. They'd probably ask you to resign in the morning."



NO HURRY.

"WAIT till I gie ye a spoon, Mac—there's a fly in yer whisky!"  
 "There's nae hurry, Jock; he has his fut on the bottom!"

"Why in the morning?" I asked with interest.

"That's when they usually do ask people to resign, isn't it?"

"You seem to know all about it."

"Well, I do, as a matter of fact. Cousin Douglas had to resign from *his* club the morning after the Boat Race night. I told him he was a silly ass to go there if he wasn't——"

"Quite so," I interposed, "though I didn't know he'd told you."



"He didn't exactly tell me—I sort of got it out of him."

"You would," I said.

We turned into St. James's Street.

"This is it," I announced, as we reached a gloomy-looking edifice. "Good-bye, dear child."

"What are you talking about? I'm coming in," said the young woman irritably.

"Over my dead body," I declared firmly. "Now, then!"

She affected to weep into a handkerchief.

"What about my tea?" she wailed.

"Kindly cease this nonsense and go away," I said sternly. "Remember where you are."

#### BUYING A HAT.

CHOOSING a new hat may be a joyous affair for a woman, but it is agony for a man.

During the preliminary struggle of hitting on the right size, he is handed hats which sink over his ears or perch saucily on top of his cranium, and he invariably discovers that the old shape to which he has grown much attached has gone out of fashion.

Notwithstanding the encouraging remarks of the shopman, he is amazed at the unfamiliar image reflected in the mirror, crowned with strange headgear faintly suggesting Charlie Chaplin or Mr. Churchill. The hat that wobbles about, he is informed, will "come to



FIT FOR A QUEEN.

SMALL CHILD'S CHAMPION: Well, I think she deserves to be queen, 'cos she's even 'ad 'er face specially an' properly washed.

"I suppose your old club doesn't run a *thé dansant*?" she asked irrelevantly.

"Being an old club, it does not," I answered with dignity. "Be off with you."

"All right, I'm going," she said. "Lend me some money. D'you mind?"

"What for?" I inquired cautiously.

Veronica considered for a moment.

"I think I'll try the *Magnifique*," she said carelessly. "I like a band to my tea."

the shape of his head," and the one that fits like a vice will "give." Finally, with a gesture of despair, he selects what he deems to be the least offensive specimen, and on being asked if he will wear it, exclaims: "Good Heavens, no! Hide the thing in a bag."



UNDINE, aged eight, had been given a ring as a birthday present, but, much to her disappointment, no one of the guests at dinner noticed it. Finally, unable to withstand their obtuseness or indifference, she exclaimed:

"Oh, dear, I'm so warm in my new ring!"

Houses with revolving rooms, we read, are now being built. There seems to be no end to the dancing mania.



## A HUSBAND'S SACRIFICE.

Beauty doctors advise their clients to rest as much as possible and take at least half a day in bed frequently.

You are foolish, my Phyllis, in scorning  
The bard as an indolent loon  
Who lingers in bed till the morning  
Has totally merged into noon;  
Though his habits be such as you've stated,  
Be assured that, whate'er he may do,  
His conduct is solely dictated  
By forethought for you.

When the lark was beginning to carol,  
He might on occasion be stirred  
To rise up and don his apparel  
If he followed the course he preferred;

## THE WATERING SEASON.

*By Herbert Strudwick.*

The watering season is now at its height. The dweller in the suburbs toils at his work through the heat of the day, and then rushes home to toil again in the sanctity of his backyard. A hasty meal, a word with the wife, and then he gets busy with the watering can. For the remainder of the evening he perambulates backwards and forwards without ceasing, until he crawls up to bed in an exhausted condition.

At this time of year the owner of a back garden feels himself to be a superior type of being: he looks upon the flat-dweller with



## OFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

HE: Hang it, dear, I shall have to get another trunk for myself!  
SHE: Yes, dearest, you must—I shall want it.

But rest is essential to beauty,  
As the leading authorities vouch,  
And so, as a matter of duty,  
He clings to his couch.

For he knows how your heart would be harried,  
Your soul would be weighted with care,  
If you found the Adonis you married  
Began to show symptoms of wear;  
Lest sorrow should sit like a hunch on  
Your shoulders thereover, he feels  
Compelled to let breakfast and luncheon  
Be synchronous meals.

*Theta.*

pity and contempt. A man without a garden is but half a man! But possession carries responsibilities. It is not enough to cut the grass and drive the next-door cat from off the borders. Nature must be aided, and if, like "Uncle Sam," she decides to "go dry"—well, something has got to be done about it.

There are two types of waterer—the man who toys with a hose, and the man who staggers to and fro with cans. Every boy loves a squirt, and it follows that every man has a sneaking liking for playing with a hose. But it is playing, and that is just where the



distinction comes in. He is a philanderer—he lacks the dogged tenacity of the man with the can.

Unquestionably it is the can-carrier who really counts; the only difficulty about him is that he never knows when to stop. It becomes an obsession. There are few more distressing objects than the man who becomes the slave of the can. Once the watering fever has got him in its grip, he is done. It becomes a physical impossibility for him to sit in his garden and get any enjoyment out of it. No, he must be up and doing. The petunias are parched, and there's duty to be done.

Many a happy home has been wrecked by this passion for watering. The trouble usually commences at the scullery tap. Domestic routine is upset, the sink overflows and the linoleum is awash. This is the invariable

#### DRAMATISING SHOPS.

We have had insect plays and animal plays, and now Richard Strauss has composed a confectionery ballet in which all the performers appear as fancy pastries.

This work will doubtless receive the flattery of imitation, and before long we may hear of a greengrocery opera, in which the leading tenor will impersonate a parsnip and the prima donna a blushing beetroot. Then, of course, there would be a *pas deux* for a carrot or a turnip, and a chorus of brussels sprouts.

There are great possibilities, too, in the hardware drama, with all the characters taken from an ironmongery store, or a chemist's shop comedy, having a strong love interest, dealing with the affection of a strong silent stick of shaving soap for a fascinating powder-puff.

R. H. Roberts.



#### SUMMING UP A SEASIDE ACQUAINTANCE.

MOTHER: I'm sorry, my dear boy, but I must say she's common.  
 SON: But she's the daughter of a General.  
 MOTHER: Umph! Father or mother?

result of leaving one can to fill while the other is rendering first aid to the herbaceous border.

No wife can be expected to countenance that sort of thing, and unpleasant developments are inevitable. Yet your confirmed waterer continues his weary work, and neither threats nor entreaties will stop him.

One of these days some kind friend will try to convince him that the use of a hose is equally beneficial. But it will be too late—nothing will wean him from the scullery tap



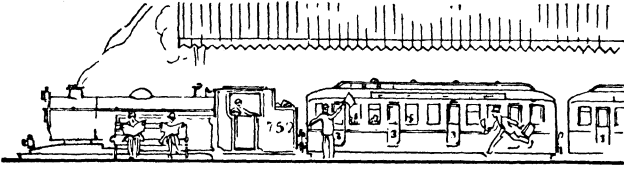
"Got any ice, waiter?"  
 "No, sir; we find it doesn't keep in this hot weather."

#### BROCCOLI.

I may show a thickness of skull,  
 I may not succeed as I should,  
 My wits may be sluggish and dull,  
 But in one thing at least I make good.  
 For when in my garden I stroll—  
 The strip they allot us in towns—  
 This ocular solace brings balm to my soul:  
 My broccoli's better than Brown's.  
 Low fencing divides each domain,  
 We hoe up the weeds and the worms,  
 From gardening chat we refrain—  
 We're hardly on talkative terms.  
 But let others aspire and achieve,  
 While Fortune pursues me with frowns,  
 This ocular solace my lot will relieve:  
 My broccoli's better than Brown's.

Jessie Pope.





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Children, where a  
Night-light glows.  
have pleasant dreams  
and sweet repose

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FRUITY HATS.

(Ladies' hats this year are often trimmed with fruit.)

She wore a wreath of bananas the time when first we met,  
And all my previous notions of millinery upset;  
I saw her but a moment, but I think I see her now  
With that bunch of ripe Canary fruit upon her snowy brow.

Another time I met her, and then upon her head  
She carried quite a dozen of tinned tomatoes red.  
I waited but a moment, and then I turned to flee,  
For the sight of that creation was a bit too much for me.

The vicar replied: "While I was preaching I saw through the window an old woman pulling a cabbage. I couldn't help thinking, 'When that cabbage comes up, over you'll go.' And I was right."



At a concert in Glasgow a famous soprano was singing a song in Italian. An old man in the front row of the pit suddenly burst into tears, and would not be comforted.

On being asked why he had broken down, he said: "She reminds me of my daughter."



SCARCELY A RECOMMENDATION.

"Oh, Pirkis, countermand that order I've given for those fountain pens—it's only just struck me that the traveller wrote it down with a pencil."

When once again I saw her, she'd got another hat,  
And oranges and lemons and figs occurred on that,  
I hurried round the corner, and I think I shall arrange  
No more to meet this damsel fair until the fashions change.



WHILE preaching one Sunday, the vicar seemed very abstracted. His eyes were continually straying toward a small window by his side.

Quite suddenly he surprised his congregation by exclaiming "I thought so!"

On leaving the church after the service, an old parishioner asked him the meaning of his words and absent-mindedness.

*Facing Third Cover.]*

"But surely," someone suggested, "your daughter couldn't sing like that?"

"No, but it was the same in a way," the old man said. "You couldn't understand what she was singing about, either."



THE telephone in a well-known surgeon's office rang, and the doctor answered it. A voice inquired: "Who is this?"

The doctor recognised the voice of his seven-year-old son, so he replied: "The smartest man in the world."

"I beg your pardon," said the boy. "I've got the wrong number."



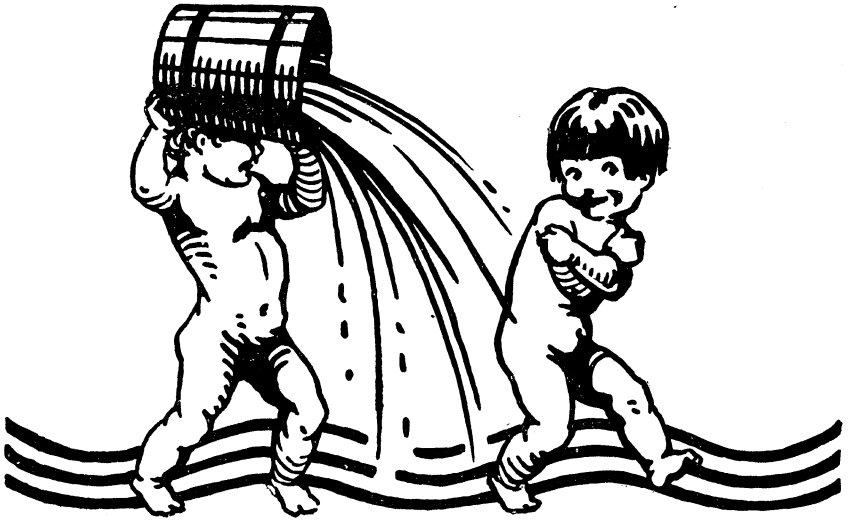
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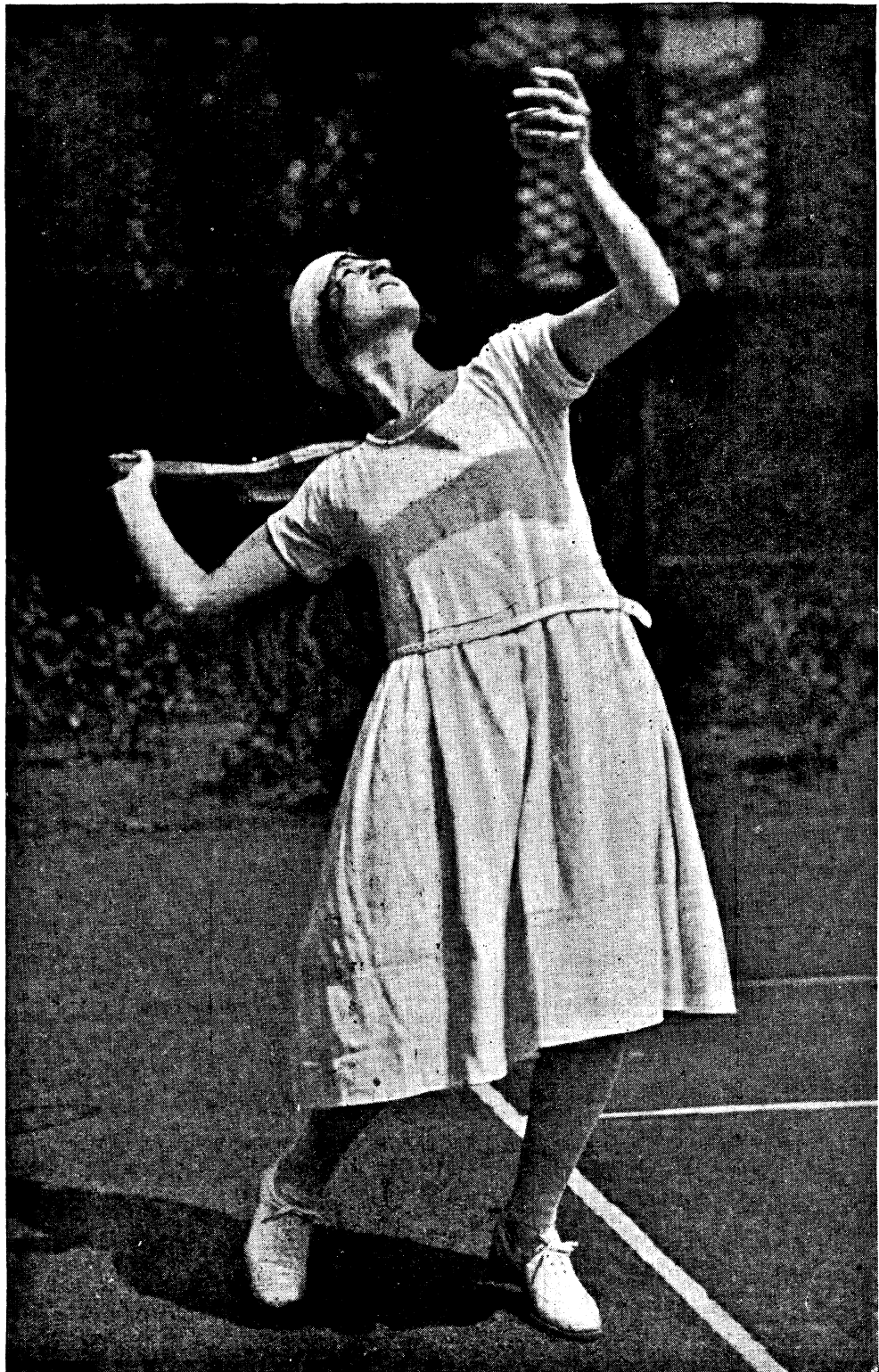
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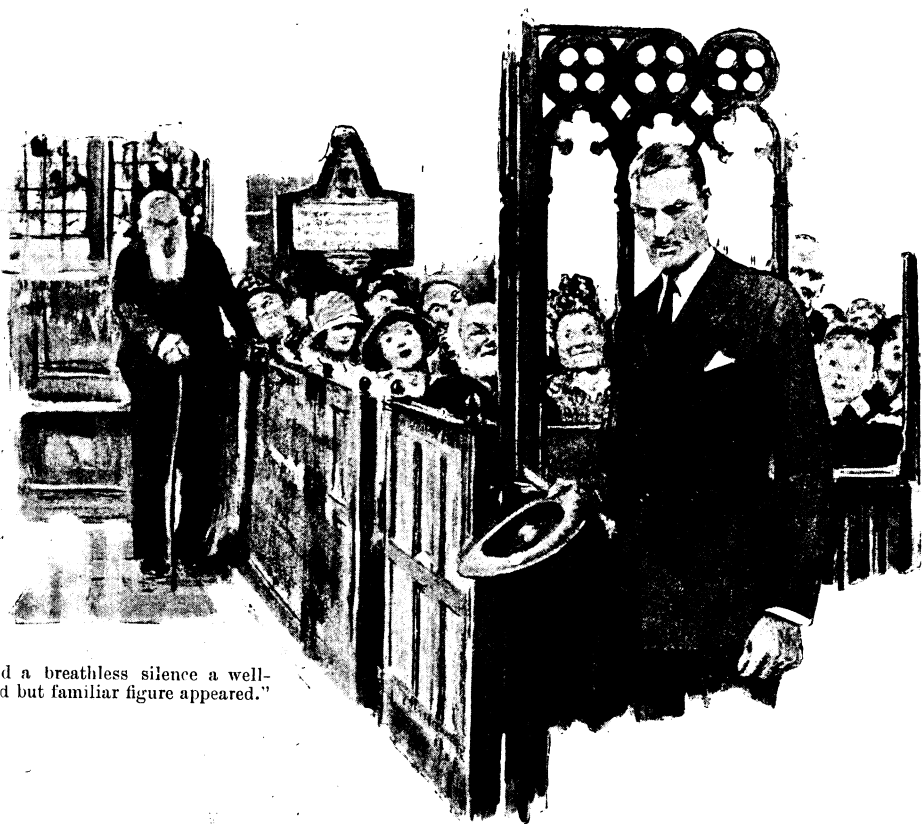




MISS MCKANE SERVING.

*"I place my left foot a few inches behind the base-line and plant it firmly on the ground, so as to make quite sure of avoiding a foot-fault. As I throw the ball up, the weight of my body is about evenly divided between the two feet and rests rather on their forepart."* See article by Miss McKane on page 486. Photograph by Cecil B. Waterlow.





"Amid a breathless silence a well-dressed but familiar figure appeared."

# THE LORD OF THE MANOR

By DORNFORD YATES

*Author of "And Five Were Foolish," "Valerie French," "Berry and Co.,"  
"Jonah and Co.," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

THE engine of the great car hesitated, sighed and then rested from its labour.

With a faint frown, its driver threw out the clutch and, using the slight gradient, coasted to the side of the road to berth her charge beneath the shadow of a convenient oak. Then she applied the hand-brake and opened her door.

"My dear," said Mrs. Trelawney, "tell me the worst. Have you done this on purpose? Or is it *force majeure*?"

"I'm afraid it's stopped on its own," said Audrey de Lisle. "But don't worry yet, Aunt Lettice. I——"

"I shouldn't think of worrying," said Mrs. Trelawney. "I'm much too fat. Besides, the prospect of being able to say

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'I told you so' is most agreeable. Finally, what a charming spot! I always think I should like to be buried beneath an elm, but I suppose the roots would get in the way."

Audrey laughed.

"There's nobody like you," she said.

"Don't be absurd," said her aunt. "I'm a most ordinary type."

Audrey shook her sweet head.

"Most people," she said, "would have been off. I admit it isn't yet time; it's quite on the cards that I can put the trouble right. Still, the motor's stopped on its own, and we, against your advice, are alone in the car. That would have been enough—for most people."

"My dear," said her aunt, "it's all a question of girth. Besides, you're a sweet pretty child. If all priests were as fat as I and all sinners as charming as you, Purgatory would close down." Audrey stepped to the bonnet. "Now, don't go and get oil on your fingers. They're much too dainty."

"I believe it's a question of fuel," said Audrey, laughing. "I may be wrong, but I think we've gone dry. Any way, I've got-my gloves on."

She opened the bonnet and sought to flood the carburettor. No petrol, however, appeared.

"That's right," said Audrey. "We're dry. But this is easy because we've a can on the step."

Mrs. Trelawney sighed.

"These technical terms," she said, "are entirely beyond me. My impulse is to express surprise that 'we have a can on the step.' Why hasn't it fallen off?"

"It's a can of gasoline—petrol," said her niece, bubbling. "It's kept there on purpose in case any time we run out. What I don't understand is that Budge assured me last night that the tank was full. I suppose the gauge has stuck. Still. . ."

She passed to the rear of the car.

A glance at the dial showed that the gauge was working. The arrow was pointing to 'EMPTY.'

Audrey unscrewed the cap of the petrol-tank and peered at its depths. These were certainly dry. What was more to the point, a tiny rent in the metal was admitting daylight. . . .

After digesting this phenomenon, Audrey screwed on the cap and returned to Mrs. Trelawney.

"Aunt Lettice, darling," she said, "I've

let you down. We're helpless. Our tank's been holed. Even if Budge were here, we couldn't move."

"Then how," demanded her aunt, "have you let me down?"

"You're very generous," said Audrey. "But if he were here, at least he could go and get help. Now I shall have to go and leave you alone."

"My dear," said Mrs. Trelawney, "I'm fifty-six, I'm sleepy and I have my tea-basket. To go further, the weather's superb, and I'm under an elm. Any woman who cannot in such circumstances face an hour of solitude must be unnaturally made. You go, my dear, and prosper. I've no fears for you. The first farmer you smile at will put a team at your service."

"I'm afraid we mayn't get to Salisbury," said Miss de Lisle.

"Then we'll stay at a village inn and forget the world. I love an adventurous life. You go and smile at your farmer, and I'll take care of the car. If anyone comes and asks if we want any help, what shall I say?"

"Say we want to be towed," said Audrey, "as far as—— Wait a minute." Hastily she consulted a map. "As far as Sundial. That's the nearest village now. I know it was Pullaway Brow where we met the sheep, because I saw the Post Office; and the next is Sundial."

"Of course," said Mrs. Trelawney, "you know far more about England than I do. I once had a footman who came from Pullaway Brow, but I'd not the faintest idea that I'd ever been there. Never mind." She stifled a yawn. "I had to send him away because he would hiss at table—a pleasant but disconcerting shibboleth."

"I only know England," said Audrey, "because I look at the map," and with that she took off her hat and threw up her head luxuriously.

"You're enterprising," said her aunt. "All Americans are. We've got the pretty garden, but you enjoy it. What's so pleasant is when you make us enjoy it too."

"Wait till to-night," said Audrey, and blew her a kiss.

A moment later she was padding along the lane with silent foot—a slim, beautiful figure, lithe, natural. When she came to a bend she turned and waved her hat.

Mrs. Trelawney waved back—tearfully.

"She has no business," she said, "to be so exquisite."

Audrey de Lisle would have been equally



at home among a herd of deer or at a State Banquet. What is more, she would have graced either company. Her dark hair was framing features which would have done credit to the coin of any realm. Her hands and her little feet were lovely things. In movement, as in repose, she was the pink of easy gracefulness. Three things, however, especially distinguished her. They were the light in her soft brown eyes, the colour springing in her cheeks and the eager smile that flashed to her little red mouth. Having seen but one of these things, a man might count himself rich; having seen two, he would certainly become meditative; but the man who had seen all three she could, if she pleased, twist round her delicate finger. That such was her power never occurred to Audrey. She was as natural as the dawn. Indeed, this and other things natural—the spring and the wind and the manner of falling water were in the girl's blood. Her father's town house had been in Boston, but the country had been her home. Not until three years ago had she tasted a city life. Rich as the fare had been, it was not to her liking. The death of her parents, however, had kept her in Town. Sweet and twenty cannot rule a country estate; moreover, she must conform to the ways of her world—see and be seen, stand in the marriage-market, eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. . . . Audrey de Lisle was no fool, took things as they came, found Life a most excellent thing, hoped deep in her heart to find it still more excellent—one day.

With the scent of hay in her nostrils, treading the curling lane that led to Sundial, Audrey snuffed an earnest of that rare excellence to come. . . .

The lane rose a little to an old oak stile on the left; the scent of hay grew stronger: voices and the jingle of harness came to the girl's ears.

Audrey quickened her steps. Here was her team.

That two magnificent greys were there is beyond question; and, further, a mighty roan in the shafts of a waggon of hay. A man was up on the top, piling the load, while two others were pitching him bottles with shining forks. On the ground, by the horses' heads, sat a little boy, eating an apple, to which first one and then the other of the greys would advance an expectant muzzle. The child pushed them away nonchalantly. The meadow, now nearly clear, was flanked by a great beech-wood,

which, with the sun behind, made a broad strip of shade down all its length. This was insisting upon the heat of the day, for the rest of the field was ablaze, and the sky cloudless.

Audrey was wondering how to make known her need, when the taller of the two pitchers planted his fork in the ground and mopped his face. Then he turned towards her and made for the stile.

As he approached, it appeared that, workman or no, he was not of the labouring class.

His shirt was open at the neck, and his sleeves rolled to the elbow; loose grey flannel trousers and brogues seemed to complete his attire, save for a soft grey hat on the back of his head. His face and arms were burned to a deep brown, his fair moustache brushed clear of a well-shaped mouth. His eye was grey and clear; his features, clean-cut; his hands, cared for. He walked slowly, as a man healthily tired, but his carriage was upright and his shoulders square.

Head in air, he passed in front of Audrey and came to the ditch. There was a stone jar. . . .

The stranger was about to drink, when Miss de Lisle lifted up her voice.

"Are you a farmer?" she said.

The other turned.

Then he lowered his glass and took off his hat.

"Not yet," he said. "But I live in hopes. At present I'm half a land-agent—and your servant, of course. I became the latter about five seconds ago."

Audrey smiled very charmingly.

"Thank you very much," she said. "And now please put on your hat and drink your beer."

"Your very good health" said the stranger, and emptied his glass. "If I had another tumbler I'd offer you some. And now—must it be a farmer? Or can half a land-agent help?"

"I want a horse," said Audrey. "It sounds like a fairy tale, but that's as it should be. This corner of England is full of nursery rhymes."

"There's one," said the stranger, "beginning 'Where are you going to, my—'"

"I want a horse," said Audrey hastily. "I've a car in the lane and an aunt in the car, but my tank's holed and I can't move."

"There we are," said the stranger. "Horse, horse, bite aunt; Aunt won't push



car; Car won't take the road; And I shan't get home to-night."

Audrey bowed before a little gale of laughter.

"About quarter 'f a mile—that way." She pointed a rosy finger. "How far is Sundial?"

"Less than a mile from here. If you'll



At length—

"Listen," she said. "If we could be towed to Sundial——"

"Is that as far," said the stranger, "as you want to go?"

"If we can put up at the inn."

The man appeared to consider.

"There's nothing the matter with *The Doublet*," he said slowly. "In fact, the parlour was made to eat bread and honey in. It's panelled with old beech boards. And then there are hives in the garden, and they bake their own bread. They're very proud of their bathroom."

"It sounds too good to be true," said Audrey de Lisle.

"It is—very nearly; only, it's rather rough. Primitive, I mean. They're a simple crowd at Sundial; they'll speak of you as 'the quality,' and you'll certainly have to show them how to do those pretty white shoes."

"I've done them myself the last two days," said Audrey. She drew her skirt close and regarded her little feet. "Don't you think they're rather good?"

"They're sweet," said the stranger, gazing. "I didn't know they made them so small. Never mind. Where's the car?"

let me dispose of this waggon. I'll come back and help. If you've got a spare can, I don't think we'll need a horse."



"But how——"

"If we fill up the vacuum tank," said the stranger, "that should get us a mile."

Miss de Lisle reflected.

"Now why," she said, "didn't I think of that?"

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"Perhaps an appreciative Providence



"Are you a farmer?" she said. . . . "Not yet," he said. "But I live in hopes!"



didn't want you to spoil your fingers. Perhaps . . ."

"My name's de Lisle," said Audrey suddenly. "Audrey de Lisle."

"I'm known as John," said the other. "Lucien John. You know. Wot 'went to bed with his breeches on.'"

"Do be careful," bubbled Audrey. "In a minute I shall really believe that I have stumbled into fairyland, and—and try to live up to it."

"That should come easy to you," said Lucien John. "I haven't placed you yet, but you're in *The Book*. And now I must go to my labour. I shall be through in ten minutes' time. Please don't start without me. Spanners are slippery things."

"I'll wait for you here," said Audrey.

As he walked back to the waggon she took her seat on the stile. . . .

Presently a whip cracked, and amid creak of wheels and cries of men the waggon lumbered out of the meadow and swayed down the lane towards Sundial, its load paying toll as it passed, till the green walls were hung with sweet-smelling wisps and the road laid with a carpet fit for a king.

At last the rumble faded, and a tall figure came stepping along the sunflecked corridor.

As he drew near to Audrey—

"I've got it," he cried. "You're 'the maiden all forlorn, That drove the car with a crumpled horn.'"

Audrey laughed delightedly.

"You're determined to work me in," she said. "But I'm afraid I'm too modern."

"Whatever," said Lucien John, "makes you think that? Why, you were before the hills."

"I feel an onlooker. I've strayed into a fascinating world, to which I don't belong. I'm—I'm a visitor to the kingdom, and you're going to show me round."

"In forty-eight hours," said John, "you'll be the Queen. You mark my words. If you stay two days at Sundial, at the end of that time you'll be 'Miss Audrey' to every soul in the place. They're like the frogs in the fable; they want a sovereign—an idol. . . . Well, you've been sent."

Audrey slid down from the stile and into the lane.

"Any way, you're a wonderful courtier," she said, smiling. "And now let's come down to earth and find the car. You'll love Aunt Lettice."

"Lettice," said Lucien thoughtfully. "It's a sweet pretty name. But I like 'Audrey' best."

"Oh, shame," cried Miss de Lisle. "'Lettice' is incomparable."

"You can have it," said Lucien John. "Give me 'Audrey.'"

"That," said Miss de Lisle, "is because some time or other you've known a girl called 'Audrey' you rather liked."

The man nodded.

"No doubt that's the explanation," he said gravely. "She was certainly dazzling. I always associate her with King Richard the Third."

"For Heaven's sake," said Audrey. "But why with him?"

"Because, my lady," said Lucien, "if Shakespeare may be believed, upon a certain occasion *he demanded a horse*."

\* \* \* \*

As Lucien John had foretold, so it fell out.

Audrey was Queen of Sundial within the week.

At the moment when she rounded Mow Corner and saw her heritage—at that moment she lost her heart.

Thatch, brick-nogging and lattice; the greys knee-deep in a pool, raising dripping muzzles to stare at the car; hollyhocks gay in a garden against a black and white wall; the cheerful ring of an anvil and the rush of a sluice; lichened stocks on a greensward and a grey lych-gate beyond; the great yews in the churchyard and an apple-cheeked swain in a smock; the blessed scent of jasmine and the flash of the setting sun upon bottle-glass panes—these and other treasures took her by storm. She worshipped the place openly—and was found worshipful.

The frogs wanted a king. The Manor House was vacant; the Vicar, a celibate recluse; Minever Park was for sale. Niche after niche was empty. And Sundial was of the old world and loathed the nakedness. The village was all agog to have a great lady.

Audrey slid into the position naturally enough.

*The Doublet* ceased to be an inn and became 'her lodging.' Men went quietly until she was awake; the first-fruits were brought to her board; on Sunday she and her aunt were led to the Manor House pew—a tremendous affair, with a fireplace and a private door in the wall, leading out of the miniature chancel and commanding the church.

The throne was waiting; that Audrey sat it so well she owed to herself. Proffering



friendship, seeking friendship in return, she received devotion. The village life was simple, unspoiled: Audrey entered into it with a whole heart. Forge, stable, dairy—she was at home in them all. Eager, appreciative, swift, the freedom of Sundial was hers: she revelled in its possession: Sundial found her revelry gracious indeed.

As for Mrs. Trelawney, she was entirely content to play the dowager. The dressing-gown of Dignity was a precious change of raiment which she had never known. To be thought resplendent daily in her most comfortable hat. . . . Her pleasant quarters at *The Doublet*, the simple, abundant fare, the fragrant garden, suited her down to the ground. Besides, her darling was happy as the days were long.

Salisbury was forgotten, the tour abandoned. A new tank arrived from London, but the great car seldom went forth from the coach-house where it was bestowed. If ever it did, it was sure to return before the sun was down.

As for Lucien John, he watched his mistress' progress with love in his eyes. . . .

That the two saw each other most days was natural enough.

If the man worked long, she found his work engaging, delighted to learn of him and study husbandry with him for husbandman. His leisure she shared naturally, as children do. He had installed her at Sundial. Besides. . . .

So much for Audrey.

For the man—well, the love in his eyes had to be served.

Often enough they repaired to Domesday Mill—a place of memories. The great wheel is silent, and the house tumbling. Ivy has run riot over the gabled roof, and the proud water, once so troubled but now unearthly still, has come to mirror the passing of the glory which it begot. But chestnut and ash and lime have come to cherish Domesday, keep it against the weather, ring it against the wind. Year by year they draw closer, put out more sheltering arms. Even now the mill lies snug in its bower as a hare in her form. True offspring of Nature, Nature is taking it back. Domesday Mill will not die; it is being translated.

Audrey de Lisle was quite silly about the spot. That Lucien John had made her aware of its existence goes without saying.

Thither the two had strolled one July evening, exactly a fortnight after the car had broken down.

"And how," said Lucien John, filling a pipe, "how do you like your kingdom?"

"I love it," said Miss de Lisle. "Why is everyone so nice?"

"Because they love you. And they love you because you fit into their nursery rhyme."

Audrey took off her hat and shook her head.

"I don't even pretend to," she said. "I never could. 'I'm pure 1924—and American. You can't turn that into verse.'"

"You're Audrey de Lisle," said Lucien. "And Audrey de Lisle might have sat for most of the sonnets I know."

Audrey tilted her chin.

"Sonnets aren't nursery rhymes."

"Or rhymes, either. Hang it, my dear, if you're 1924, so's Sundial. Don't forget that. I don't say it looks it, but then—neither do you."

Audrey plucked at her dress.

"This came from Paris," she said, "six weeks ago. I hardly think Bo-Peep was so extravagant. And then I sleep in pyjamas and use bath-salts and smoke. And I powder my nose and drive a high-powered car. You won't find that sort of stuff in a nursery rhyme."

"The Queen was in the parlour," said Lucien John. "It doesn't say how she was dressed, but I imagine she did herself just as well as she could. I don't know about the pyjamas, and I'm sure her stockings weren't in the same street as yours, but I've always sort of believed that the contents were. And that's the point. One reads of Queens and fine ladies and maidens and all, and then one day, if one's lucky, one comes across you. And there's the original of the lot."

Audrey lay back on the turf and stared at the trembling green and the blue beyond.

"That's very charming of you, but——"

"It isn't at all," said Lucien. "It's the unvarnished truth. And if you want any further argument, always remember this. When you came to Sundial you went straight up to the throne. Well, once you're there, pyjamas and such things don't count. The Queen can do no wrong."

Miss de Lisle laughed.

"Listen to the Queen-maker," she said. "Well, be it so. I'm up on the throne of Sundial—Heaven knows why. The trouble is I've only a pasteboard crown."

"What do you mean?" said Lucien, lighting his pipe.



"I've no power," said Audrey. "At best, I'm only a doll."

"I should have said you were omnipotent. You've only to breathe to——"

"Real power," said Audrey. "I can't put anything right. I can smile and say 'Never mind,' but that's where I get off. Now, the Lord of the Manor's got power. He's a real king—worse luck."

"The Lord of the Manor?" said Lucien. "Who's been talking of him?"

"My subjects, of course," said Audrey, crossing her ankles. "They hate him like anything. But what can I do? I've only a pasteboard crown."

"Why do they hate him?" said John.

"Because he's a sweep," said Audrey. "He doesn't play the game. He shoves up the rents, he never does any repairs, he makes them pay for grazing on Mesne Holms, he stopped a funeral going by Witchery Drive, and, worst of all, he never comes near the place. I know you're his agent's pupil, but that doesn't alter the facts."

"I've only been here a month," said Lucien John, "and the agent in question has left me to shift for myself. At the moment I think he's——"

"He's with his master," said Audrey, "trying to temper the wind. Everyone says *he's* all right. He does his best, but the Lord of the Manor's a sweep. He won't hear a word. Warthog's sick and tired of doing his dirty work—says so openly."

Lucien John frowned.

"Perhaps, if he came to Sundial——"

"But he won't," said Audrey, sitting up and smacking the turf with her palm. "Warthog's implored him to come time and again. He says he believes it's because he hasn't the face."

Lucien John sighed.

"Well, well," he said. "There's nothing like a fool in his folly. Fancy owning Sundial, an' letting it rip. . . . An' a pew like a loose-box. . . . Still, it's an ill wind. If he's such a sweep, we're better without the gent. Would you like to see the house—'that Jack built'?"

"The Manor House? Rather."

"I'm going to-morrow—officially, at ten o' the clock."

"I'll be there," said Audrey, pulling the grass by her side. "But I wish I could do something," she added wistfully.

"Don't get embroiled in politics, my pretty maid."

Miss de Lisle frowned.

"I've a jolly good mind," she said, "to write to him."

"You don't even know his name," said Lucien John.

"Yes, I do. Pendragon. And you can get his address."

Lucien swallowed.

"I'm sure you'd be asking for trouble," he said uneasily. "Why not let sleeping dogs lie? You can't believe all the gossip that——"

"I can and do," said Audrey. "I don't say I'm going to write, but I'd like his address. I shall expect it at ten to-morrow morning."

"Very good, m'lady," said John, and pulled his forelock.

"Here, I'm not a Queen to you," said Audrey de Lisle.

"You give me orders," said Lucien, "and reject my advice."

"That's not a royal prerogative. Every woman does that. But I won't accept homage from you—not even in jest. I don't like it."

"You called me a courtier once," said Lucien John.

"I take it back," said Audrey. "I didn't know you then."

"Too late," said Lucien mournfully, shaking his head. "The damage is done. You ought to be more careful. If you didn't want my, er, homage, you should have stayed away. You came: I saw: you conquered. Now I'm your thrall. Of course I'm familiar—rather like an old nurse. I grin when I see you coming, I call you 'Audrey'—at least, I'm going to in future—and I criticise your clothes. I also make personal remarks. I'm not sure we oughtn't to kiss one another. For all that, I'm your thrall—Audrey."

Audrey put a hand to her temples.

"This is terrible," she said. "I'd no idea I was so—so compelling. . . . Lucien dear."

"Look in your glass," said Lucien. "The pier-glass, I mean. Not that the other won't do, but the pier-glass'll hit harder. What colour are the pyjamas?"

"Periwinkle blue," gurgled Audrey.

"Oh, I can't bear it," cried Lucien, covering his eyes. "Never mind. Look in the blinkin' glass. . . . That'll give you an idea. Of course it won't be the same. You've a way—a carelessness of pose and gesture that takes a man by the throat. It's a sort of assault—a precious battery. Sitting up on that stile, just as if you'd



alighted—dropped out of the sky, swinging your sweet pretty leg, with a hand on your hip and a maddening smile on your mouth, 'all on a summer's day'—well, I give you my word I almost expected you to say 'He's pinched the lot.'"

In a shaking voice—

"I'm sure," said Audrey, "Bo-Peep would never have——"

Lucien rose to his feet and knocked out his pipe.

"Who's talkin' about Bo-Peep?" he said contemptuously. "The lady I saw was H.M. The Queen of Hearts."

\* \* \* \* \*

At five minutes to ten the next morning Audrey was leaning against the Manor House gates. These were of wrought iron and great beauty.

As Lucien John approached—

"Have you got his address?" she demanded.

Lucien mentioned a Club.

"That's all I can find," he said. "But why——"

"Warthog's been sacked," said Audrey with blazing eyes. "That's why."

"The devil he has," said Lucien. "What about me?"

"What about Sundial?" said Audrey. "The village has lost its shepherd—its only friend."

"It's still got its Queen," said Lucien. "I can see that."

Audrey stamped her foot.

"Don't laugh," she said. "I'm in earnest. I'm going to write to the brute."

"Audrey, I beg you——"

"Show me the house," said Audrey. "As soon as I've seen it, I'm going straight back to write."

Lucien took out a key and unfastened the padlock.

With the chain in his hand, he looked at her.

"I know every woman does it," he said gently, "but they don't all do it like you."

Audrey said nothing at all.

In silence they passed up the avenue. . . .

So they came to an archway with a coat-of-arms cut in the grey stone. This admitted to a courtyard, silent and sunlit.

For a moment they stood gazing. Then a touch on his arm made Lucien John look round.

A grave-eyed maiden was looking him in the face.

"I beg your pardon," she said in a low voice. "I had no right. It was very"—

her eyes fell, and she blushed exquisitely—"very rotten of me to take it out upon you."

She was in his arms, and his face three inches away.

"Audrey, my sweet, my darling. . . ."

"No, no! Not that! Not that! I mean. . . ."

The man let her go instantly.

For a moment Audrey stood with her hand to her heart, breathing uncertainly.

Then—

"What a beautiful courtyard," she said. "Will you go and unfasten the door? And I'll come on."

\* \* \* \* \*

A week toiled by, during which the two met hardly at all.

Then one morning a sweet-smelling note arrived at Lucien's lodging before he was up. . . .

That evening found them both on the sward before Domesday Mill.

"The Lord of the Manor," said Audrey, "has a pretty wit."

"Yes?" said Lucien John.

Audrey produced a letter.

"Read that," she said.

*Dear Miss de Lisle,*

*I know you well by repute, and I am satisfied that, when one so correct as yourself is impelled to take up the cudgels upon my tenants' behalf, only a high sense of duty can have created that impulse. I therefore accept your letter as that of a cousin, and as such I answer it.*

*You and I are plainly of different schools. You believe in the snaffle, and I believe in the curb. I do not suggest that you are wrong or argue that I am right, but what I have I will hold—in my own way. Call me hard, if you please, and say that I gather where I have not strawed. My withers are unwrung. I am of the other school. While I am Lord of the Manor, I will sell none of my land nor will I alter my ways. Horses are meant to be ridden, and, while I am in the saddle, I will ride Sundial on the curb.*

*I say 'while I am in the saddle.'*

*Your letter was unusual enough to interest anyone. Coming from you, it interested me very much. I therefore sent for Mr. John, the pupil to my late agent, and, as I expected, he was able to tell me as much as I wanted to know. I have requested him, should you desire it, so far as he can, to do you the same office. Ask him, and he will tell you what manner of man I am.*



*You will wonder why I should take pains to put such information at your disposal. It is because I am willing to strike a bargain with you.*

*If you will become my wife, I will give to you absolutely all my title-deeds (including, of course, those of the Manor House) and assign to you every manorial right that I possess. In a word, I will make you the Lady of the Manor.*

*Yours faithfully,  
Charles Pendragon.*

"Why, the man's mad," cried Lucien. "Stark, staring. He's got his dates wrong. This is the sort of deal they did in the Stone Age."

"It sounds," said Audrey, "as though he meant what he said. I suppose, in your innocence, you gave me a pretty good chit."

"He asked what you were like, and I told him the truth. I never dreamed——"

"Of course you didn't," said Audrey. "He took jolly good care of that. I know just what he's like. He's a brilliant, *blasé* Gallio—with a pretty wit. He might have done anything: in point of fact, he's done nothing. When he plays, he plays high: and whether he wins or loses he doesn't care—with the result that he usually wins. He doesn't care. He doesn't care about Sundial: he doesn't care about me: we're pawns. He'd sell his birthright not for a mess of pottage, but for a cup of spice. That letter's typical—because it's a masterpiece. Think what the man who wrote that could have done as a diplomat."

"I don't see that it's anything wonderful," said Lucien John. "It's a piece of blasted impertinence, but——"

"Think," said Audrey. "In effect he says 'Your interference was bad form: the only possible excuse for it was a sense of duty too strong to be withstood. Whether you were really so actuated remains to be seen.'"

Lucien shrugged his shoulders.

"You would write," he said.

"I *had* to, Lucien. I couldn't sit still and have everyone so sweet and not raise a finger to help."

The other sighed.

"Well, it's done now," he said. "I suppose you won't let me take it up with the brute."

"Take what up?" said Audrey.

"This letter, of course."

"But it's unexceptionable," said Audrey.

"That's what's so clever. He's stepped out

and met me on my own ground. It may be out of bounds, but I can't curse him for that. I chose it. . . . Besides, if it comes to that, he may be bluffing: but if I like to call his bluff, I'll bet he pays. And he stands to lose a bit."

"'Lose'?" screamed Lucien. "Oh, the girl's mad. 'Lose'?"

"It's a sporting offer," said Audrey. "You can't get away from that. And that's the strongest card in a very strong hand, my friend. If I turn it down——"

"'If,'" cried Lucien John. "You don't mean to say you're even contemplating doing anything else?"

"It's been done before," said Audrey.

"Lady Godiva was a sport."

"Yes, but hers was a two-hour stunt. This is a lifer. You can't chuck away your life so that half a dozen clowns can shove their rotten sheep on to Mesne Holms."

"They're not rotten sheep," said Audrey. "Besides, I mightn't be chucking it away. I might get to like him very much. You never know. What sort of eyes has he got?"

"Watery ones," said Lucien. "Looks as if he drank."

Miss de Lisle frowned.

"How old is he?" she demanded.

"I believe he's about thirty-five. He's a proper waster, you know."

"He would like to hear his mediator, wouldn't he?"

"I never undertook to plead his cause."

"You've broken his bread," said Audrey.

"I wish I'd broken his neck," growled Lucien John. Audrey threw back her head and fell into silvery laughter. Then she drew out a letter and put it into his hand. "I think I've teased you enough," she said.

*Dear Mr. Pendragon,*

*It is indeed plain that you and I are of different schools. I should not, for instance, have 'pumped' a gentleman who, had he dreamed of the use to which his information was to be put, would have seen you dead before he had opened his mouth.*

*I refuse your offer because I do not think there is a poor man in Sundial who would not rather go hungry, with you for lord, than that I should pay so dear to become his lady.*

*One thing more.*

*Unless I hear from you by return of post that you will immediately:—*

*(a) reinstate Mr. Warthog,*

*(b) throw open Mesne Holms,*



(c) let me the Manor House for a term of seven years at a rent not exceeding twice that which a reputable firm of house-agents shall consider just, I shall hand a copy of this correspondence to the local Press,

Yours faithfully,

Audrey de Lisle.

"D'you think that'll fix him?" said Audrey.

"It'll certainly shake him up," said Lucien John.

The Lord of the Manor replied with commendable dispatch.

Dear Miss de Lisle,

I beg that you will include a copy of this letter in the dossier which you hand to the Press.

I shall not reinstate Warthog.

I dismissed him because upon a belated investigation of his stewardship many things became apparent. Of these I will mention three only:—

(a) he has for three years robbed me right and left:

(b) the better to line his pockets, he has consistently represented me to be a harsh and unconscionable landlord, to whom money was a god:

(c) the respective epidemics of smallpox and diphtheria, by reports of which he deterred me from visiting Sundial, never prevailed.

I have not the power to throw open Mesne Holms. It is common land, and if grazing fees have been paid for its use, they have been appropriated by Warthog.

I will not let you The Manor House because I propose quite shortly to reside there myself.

Yours faithfully,

Charles Pendragon.

So did Audrey de Lisle.

Dear Lucien John,

Thank you very much for your letter. I'm sorry I called you a 'sweep' and I'm sorry that I believed all the gossip I heard. That comes of going outside my nursery rhyme. I won't do it again.

I never knew you were Pendragon till I saw that the Arms on the archway were the same as those on your ring. I ought to have realised then that you knew your job, but the dismissal of Warthog stuck in my throat. It never occurred to me that he was a rogue.

Your self-indignation the other evening was priceless. I loved it. I had to join in, of course, but I didn't mean all I said.

Please may I see The Manor House again? Last time I was rather preoccupied. Will you take me there this evening, and tell me if I may tell Sundial the truth and say that the Lord of the Manor will be in his family pew on Sunday morning?

Audrey.

\* \* \* \*

It was the quiet hour.

The sun had just gone down, and the broad terrace was flushed with a rosy pride: the aged giants upon the lawn stood up like gentlemen-at-arms, majestic monuments of silence: the sweet air was breathless. Somewhere a wood-pigeon was chanting the ritual of Peace.

"May I tell Sundial?" said Audrey.

"Yes."

"And will you be in your pew on Sunday morning?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell me?" said Audrey.

The Lord of the Manor smiled.

"You made a most excellent Queen. If I had said who I was, it would have cramped your style."

"You let me sit in your pew, find favour by calling you names, order you about your own business . . . Why did you do that, Lucien?"

The Lord of the Manor stared at the plumes of the cedars against the blue of the sky.

"You know why," he said.

There was a silence.

At length—

"The end had to come," said Audrey: "the end of the fairy tale. We came for a night and we've stayed for nearly a month. It was very nice of you to let it go on so long."

"If I'd had my way," said Pendragon, "it would be still running. But the Queen wandered out of the parlour and into the counting-house."

"A most undignified act," said Audrey de Lisle. "If she'd stuck to her bread and honey, all would have been well."

"It wasn't undignified at all," said the Lord of the Manor. "It was purely feminine."

"The truth is," said Audrey, "you can take a maiden all forlorn and put a crown on her head: but that doesn't make her a Queen."

"And a Queen," said Lucien John, "can put off her crown and call herself over the coals and say the fairy tale's over and get into her car and drive out of the nursery



rhyme: but that doesn't alter the fact that she's a fine lady. 'She shall have music wherever she goes.'"

Perched upon the broad balustrade, her little hands folded in her lap, Audrey stared upon the flags.

"Why," she said, "did the Lord of the Manor make the proposal he did? Surely he never thought that I should accept it."

"There was no reason why you shouldn't. Sundial means everything to you. I didn't imagine you'd wire back 'Every time,' but I thought you'd negotiate."

"Lucien!"

"Why not? The offer was honourable—the sort of offer that's made by a King to a Queen."

"Perhaps," said Audrey slowly, "perhaps that's why I didn't take it. Being only a maiden all forlorn, my tastes are more simple. Besides, what makes you say that Sundial means everything to me?"

Lucien shrugged his shoulders.

"I'd like you to know," he said, "that, if you'd negotiated, you would have won hands down. The deeds would have been yours—with nothing to pay."

"What makes you say that Sundial means everything to me?"

Pendragon stared into the distance with eyes that saw nothing.

"A fool finds out things," he said, "when a fool's in love . . . I fell in love with you. But then you know that. I loved you the moment I saw you standing there by the stile. And you were so very nice that, idiotically enough, I began to think that perhaps I meant something. It was great presumption, of course—but I did. I thought perhaps I figured in the nursery rhyme. . . . The trouble was that you were a Queen, while I—well, I wasn't a King. . . . And then one day you came right down from your throne and kneeled at my feet—that morning, in the courtyard. . . . Well, we both know what happened then. Late as it is, my lady, I beg your pardon. But that's by the way. The point is, it opened my eyes. It showed me that Sundial *without me* was still Sundial, but that I *without Sundial* was less than nothing at all—in a word, that I did *not* figure in the nursery rhyme."

Audrey raised her straight eyebrows, and a faint smile played about her beautiful mouth.

"You know," she said dreamily, "it's a shame about you." The man started. "You're a King really, but you choose to

masquerade as a 'man all tattered and torn.' One day you find a 'maiden all forlorn' and put a crown on her head. Then you're all upset because you want to kiss her—stay where you are, please—but you can't do that because she's a Queen. So you sit all still and gloomy and listen to her railing against the King. Then, having worked her anger against the King up to fever heat, you tell her that you're the King and try to kiss her. . . . Well, whatever do you expect the poor girl to do?"

"May I move now?"

"Certainly not. Besides, how many times d'you think the man all tattered and torn tried to kiss the maiden all forlorn before she let him do it?"

"Once," said Pendragon, putting his arms about her and drawing her on to her feet.

As she slid down from the stone—

"I never said you could move," said Audrey de Lisle.

"You shouldn't 've made me a King," shouted her squire, and with that he kissed her.

"I wanted you to do that the very first day," whispered the girl. "But if you had I'd never have stayed at Sundial." She slid an arm round his neck. "And you say you didn't figure . . ." She threw up her glorious head and smiled into his eyes. "Why, my blessed, *you made it*. It's not been a nursery rhyme—it's been my love-story."

"Audrey, Audrey, my darling. . . ."

"When I saw the Arms that morning, I nearly fainted. Then I went all cold, to think that you—*my* Prince Charming—were really the wicked lord. . . . The moment you let me go I saw my mistake. In a flash I realised that you were playing some game. Then I got all mad to think that you'd kept it from me—so I started in too. . . . But I nearly gave it away that evening at Domesday Mill, when you said he had watery eyes. It—it was so libellous, Lucien. . . ."

Pendragon smiled.

"My beautiful lady," he said, "that came to me out of the blue. There never was, I believe, such a fairy tale. I was afraid to kiss you for fear of breaking things up. You know. The Sleeping Beauty. If I waked you with a kiss, you might kiss me back:—but then, again, you mightn't. And then in the end I did . . . and the worst happened."

"But you didn't, dear," said Audrey. "If you had. . . ."



Pendragon sighed.

"Of course," he said, "I shall never understand women."

Audrey put up her mouth and closed her eyes.

"Real men don't," she murmured. "That's why I love you so."

\* \* \* \* \*

Sunday morning came, and the great sun with it. The day was all glorious.

Excitement in Sundial was running high. All that the village knew was that Warthog was proved a rogue, and that the Lord of the Manor would take his rightful seat that August morning.

The tiny church was packed ten minutes before the hour.

At five minutes to eleven the private door was opened, and amid a breathless silence a well-dressed but familiar figure appeared in the Pendragon pew.

Sundial's heart stood still.

Then—

"Why, it's Mister John," piped an old, tremulous voice.

Pent-up feelings vented themselves in an hysterically explosive 'Sh-h-h.'

Pendragon rose to his feet and glanced down the church. Then he stepped down from the chancel and passed to Mrs. Trelawney and Miss de Lisle.

A whisper, and the ladies rose and preceded him to his family pew.

The ranks of Sundial 'could scarce forbear to cheer.'

But when, after the Second Lesson, the Vicar published 'the Banns of Marriage between Lucien John Charles Pendragon, Bachelor, and Audrey de Lisle, Spinster, both of this Parish,' the concluding sentences were lost in a spontaneous rendering of Sundial's favourite hymn.

This was the Old Hundredth.

The villagers of Sundial are simple folk.

*Another complete story by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number.*



## DRIVEN LEAVES.

**S**LEEP would have none of me last night,  
Far down, along the starlit street,  
The first of summer's leaves to fall  
Raced by on restless, running feet.

Sport of a fretful, urging breeze,  
Unstaying at mine or any door,  
Their rustle broke like spray of dreams  
On rocks low tides reveal no more.

If I could set those leaves again  
On boughs their green youth once made fair,  
Then might I pierce the shade they cast,  
And find you still in sunshine there!

ETHEL M. HEWITT.



# FOOTWORK AND SERVICE IN LAWN TENNIS

By KATHLEEN MCKANE

LADY CHAMPION

HOW TO LEARN FOOTWORK BY WATCHING: THE CO-OPERATION OF FOOT AND HAND AND EYE: THE SERVICE, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL OVERHEAD STROKES: THE RULES OF SERVICE: A METHOD OF SERVICE AS A BASIS FOR BEGINNERS: STRATEGY IN SERVICE

*Illustrated from new photographs by Cecil B. Waterlow, for which Miss McKane has posed specially for this article.*

I BELIEVE that there is no game so delightful to watch as lawn tennis, and the enthusiasm of the vast crowds that gather at Wimbledon every year seems to bear me out. The people who go there and elsewhere to watch first-class play do so to see the game and follow it with real attention, not to look at each other. Whilst I am now trying as best I can to describe how to play lawn tennis, I should like to give a little advice also about how to watch it, for the intelligent and attentive onlooker, seeking to improve his or her game, can learn quite as much that way as in any other.

## FOOTWORK AS THE BASIS OF A SOUND GAME.

The subject of footwork was touched upon in the last article, and it is of the utmost importance, for it is, in a sense, the basis on which all the rest of the game stands. In watching a good match you may start with your mind made up to observe the players' footwork closely, and then get so interested in an exciting contest that you forget all about it, and watch only the strokes and whether they are winners or losers, without being able to analyse the causes. If you are close enough, it is quite a good plan to try holding a card up before your eyes so as to screen off all except the feet of the player whom you are watching.

If you are observing a good exponent of footwork, you will then see that whilst he waits for the ball he is generally poised on the front part of his feet, with his heels off the ground; that when he runs he starts with short, quick steps, which increase in length as he goes, and that he sometimes makes a little skip to get into step, so that the proper foot may be in position when he comes to make the stroke. Having made his stroke, he always has his feet so arranged as to preserve his balance and to enable him to move in any direction without delay.

The player, of course, does not think of all these things every time that he runs. He has been through the mill, and the arts of good footwork have become automatic by practice, natural aptitude, and experience.

## SOME FINE EXAMPLES.

To watch Mlle. Lenglen in this way is a very fine lesson, for I believe that her footwork is the most perfect of any player's, man or woman, of our time. There are, of course, other masters of the art. Señor Alonzo is particularly well worth watching for the speed and dexterity of his feet. M. Borotra, the last Wimbledon champion in the men's singles, is ubiquitous on the court, and has cultivated the art of running backwards as fast as most people can proceed forwards. Hence it is almost impossible to lob successfully against him





GETTING THE BACKHAND STROKE WITH A GOOD GRIP, WITH THE WEIGHT COMING FORWARD ON TO THE RIGHT FOOT, AND WITH THE RIGHT SHOULDER TOWARDS THE NET.

in such a way that he cannot return the ball with a smash that is untakable in its force and precision. Tall people, such as M. Borotra, are generally credited with being most difficult to lob against; but this is by no means always the case, for height means weight, and that often causes comparative ungainliness—an inability to change direction quickly, whilst a small player can acquire a more cat-like agility. Many of the world's best players are below the average height. Mr. Johnstone, M. Cochet, M. Lacoste and Colonel Kingscote are outstanding examples, whilst among the ladies Miss Ryan, who is by no means tall, is second to none in the effectiveness of her overhead strokes in the doubles game.

But great players such as these do not pause to reflect, whilst they are playing, about the rules of footwork and stroke production. They generally forget all about their feet, concentrating on the ball and the opponent. The enormous number of things which, according to some teachers, one must think of and watch, in order to make a successful stroke, furnishes excellent

material for comic writers to exercise their humour upon. They like to picture the bewilderment of the hopeful novice who is trying seriously to learn to play well. I hope to avoid some of this confusion by stating the way in which things usually happen in actual play, as well as by enumerating rules and principles upon which they ought to happen. Apart from stroke production—apart from the actual manipulation of the racket—the player's feet and eyes must work together, like the pistons and the igniting spark of a petrol engine, with a precision that is infallible and automatic. To get this precision, or something approximating to it, for it is good to have a high ideal, one must both watch and play. One must watch, not to see who wins, but how it is done; and play, not to beat one's opponent, but to practise, watching one's steps as in a dancing lesson, and thinking of the rules and how they affect one's own particular case.

This, be it noted, is almost the direct opposite of what one's attitude should be in tournament play, when all one's



powers are concentrated upon winning the game.

But to attempt to follow all the rules that one has been told or has read in books is not always satisfactory, and is, in any case, not enough. I have already mentioned the importance of personality and individual style in lawn tennis. Therefore, in studying the subject by photographs and diagrams of stroke production, from lengthy and eloquent discourses about how to do it, as well as from watching first-class play, you should say to yourself: "How is all this going to benefit me and improve my own peculiar and imperfect style?"

#### SOME FURTHER REASONS FOR WATCHING THE BALL.

Suppose that your backhand strokes are comparatively weak, so that you have been running round and avoiding them whenever you could. You then have a practice game in which you attempt backhanders all the time, refusing to run round them. Assuming that you are a right-handed player, probably you often find yourself in a position facing the net, so that to take your backhand you have to dive to the left, which brings your weight on to the left foot, the wrong one for the backhand stroke. By persevering you will correct this bad footwork after a little trouble, and will get your backhand stroke with a good grip, with the weight coming forward on to the right foot, and with your right shoulder towards the net, and there will be, of course, a notable improvement in the result.

But still you may lack confidence, the force and direction of your backhanders may still be uncertain, so that you continue to avoid them whenever you can without getting seriously displaced on the court. Such a state of affairs is almost certain to be due to not watching the ball so well on the back- as on the forehand side. You may tend to get just a little bit too close to the ball, and so to jerk your head back at the last critical instant, when the image of the ball should sail right on to the most sensitive spot on the retina, so that the optic nerve can convey its lightning message and get the reply right down to your hand, telling it where to sweep the racket.

Comparatively few people are able to watch the ball equally well on both back-and forehand sides, but still fewer know that this is the chief reason why they are

safer on the one side than on the other, attributing the difference far more often to the comparative ease with which they think they can grip and make the different muscular movements involved.

#### DIFFERENT STYLES AND NATIONALITIES.

On the whole, I think that the leading French players show the highest all-round standard in footwork, and consequently the greatest freedom and facility in stroke production. English women players in the aggregate are ahead of the ladies of other countries, probably because of the very large share which exercise and outdoor sport takes in the education of English girls, and the universal popularity of dancing in our country. The cricket and football of British schoolboys do not induce the delicacy and precision of foot movement that are necessary for first-class lawn tennis. That is, perhaps, the chief reason why the average Englishman is comparatively slow and ponderous on the court. He can run, but he does not run in quite the right way for winning at lawn tennis. But he can learn also, and, if he starts young enough, may again learn to beat the world.

I have dwelt upon a supposed weakness on the reader's part in the matter of backhand strokes, and suggested that, if it exists, it is almost certainly not due to one cause alone—not necessarily to the wrist's natural weakness, or entirely to faulty footwork, or even to bad judgment in watching and timing the ball, but to a combination of these and other such causes, which must be hunted out and chased away before that much-desired ideal "all-round" game can be approached. In those comparatively rare cases in which a player is strongest on the backhand side, the defect in the forehand stroke production is usually obviously due to not watching the ball so well on the forehand side. The player, who should naturally be able to get a strong free sweep for the forehand drive, often gets too close to the ball in an instinctive endeavour to see it better, with the result that at the last instant he is obliged to give a backward jerk which upsets both his vision and his balance, or else to make a stroke that is cramped, awkward, and ineffective. One does not really see the ball any better by getting a foot or so closer than is convenient for making the stroke, yet this bad habit is a difficult one to break.



# SERVICE: THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL OVERHEAD STROKES.

The foregoing remarks apply just as much to volleying and overhead strokes as to the backhand and forehand drive. Perhaps the most important thing—a matter over which many people fail—is to keep one's balance in making an overhead stroke. One cannot

overhead strokes advisedly, because the majority of lady players have now abandoned the old-fashioned underhand method, and have adopted the more masculine style of service overhead.

The best underhand service can never be so fast as a quite moderate overhead delivery, simply because, coming from so much lower down, if it has the speed it is bound to fly over the service line and be a fault. The best that a good underhand service can do is to break in a manner calculated to disconcert the receiver, and unless the server can continually vary the spin on the ball, the opponent will soon get used to it and know how to deal with it more effectively than with an overhead delivery of quite ordinary pace.

A fairly fast overhead service, starting as it does from a height of six or seven feet above the ground, must necessarily bound higher than an underhand service; consequently the receiver is forced further back in order to take it, and this in itself gives the server's side an advantage both in a single and still more in a double, because the further back the receiver is, the more difficult it is for him to pass his opponents with the return.

All this is very simple reasoning. It is, indeed, only common-sense with a little very elementary mechanics thrown in, and my only reason for approaching the subject of service in this way is to



ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH OF A BACKHAND STROKE WITH THE WEIGHT COMING FORWARD ON TO THE RIGHT FOOT.

make a smash off one's heels. The result of attempting to do so is invariably a failure, because with the body's weight on the heels one has no flexibility and suppleness of movement, or margin with which to reach out for the ball.

But first I will consider the most important of all overhead strokes—the service. I say

dispel the illusion, under which some people still labour, that it is best for a woman to serve underhand. All girls should learn to serve overhead, otherwise they will never be able to make the best of their powers at lawn tennis. But an effective overhead service is a most difficult thing to learn if one has grown up and acquired a certain



amount of proficiency with the underhand delivery, because the movements do not usually come easily and naturally to girls, as they do to boys, who have learned to chuck stones at a very early age.

It is possible—indeed, it is easy—to point out the mistakes that people make with their overhead service, and one can always learn from mistakes; but it is difficult to give rules and instructions that are really helpful to beginners, especially women players. A fast service can be achieved without great physical strength by giving the racket a full swing back and by bringing it over, not with the arm and shoulder alone, but with a certain amount of body swing as well. Too much body swing, however, leads to an unbalanced, uncontrolled stroke.

#### A METHOD OF SERVING AS A BASIS FOR BE- GINNERS.

More points are won or lost outright with the service than with any other stroke in lawn tennis. Therefore it is not only the most important overhead stroke in the game, but for most players the most important stroke of all. Without for a moment suggesting that my own particular method of serving is the best for everyone, I will describe it briefly, as a basis from which to attack this most serious problem. I place my left foot a few inches behind the base-line and plant it firmly on the ground, so as to make quite sure of avoiding a foot-fault. As I throw the ball up, the weight of my body is about evenly divided between the two feet and rests rather on their forepart. As I strike the ball, my weight comes forward on to the left foot, the right foot leaves the ground, comes forward

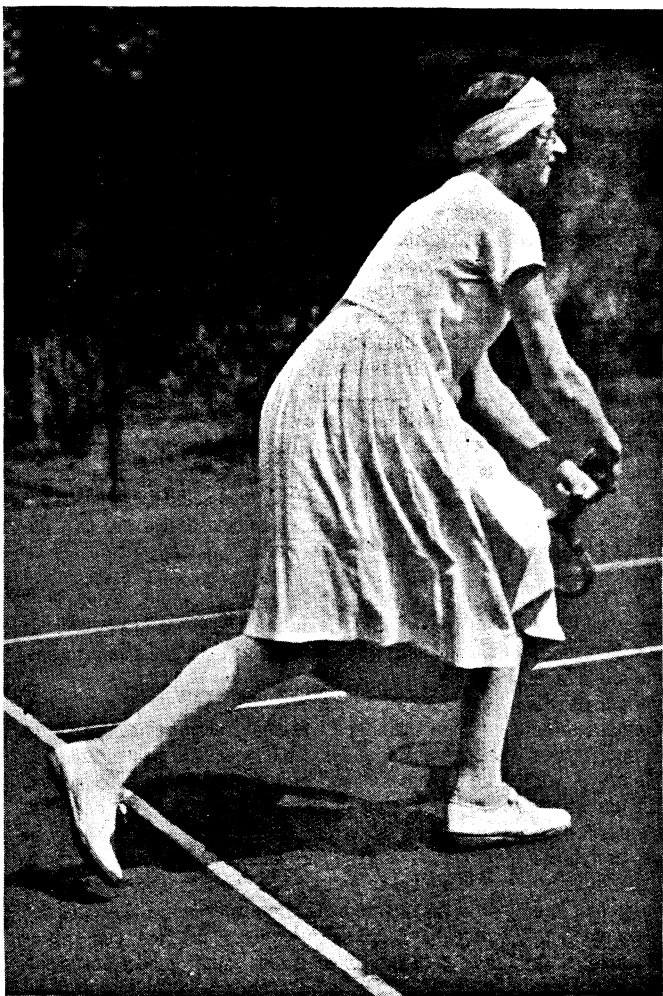
and makes a stride over the line after the ball has been struck. My friends tell me that for my first service, at any rate, I throw the ball rather higher than most people—about seven feet above my head—and I throw it as nearly as possible so that, if it were allowed to fall without being hit, it would drop about a foot in front of my right shoulder. I do not usually put spin on the ball, but hit it squarely, for in this way the greatest speed is obtained with the least expenditure of energy.

But to make a service in this way—that is, both fast and correct—greater accuracy is



A LOW FOREHAND VOLLEY ILLUSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE FEET PLACED RIGHTLY AND OF CONCENTRATING UPON THE BALL.





FINISH OF SERVICE. (SEE PHOTOGRAPH REPRODUCED AS FRONTSPIECE TO THIS NUMBER.)

*"As I strike the ball, my weight comes forward on to the left foot, the right foot leaves the ground, comes forward and makes a stride over the line after the ball has been struck."*

required in timing than when a certain amount of spin or cut is imparted to the ball. It is a fact that in any lawn tennis stroke the flight and direction of the ball are more easily controlled if it is given a certain amount of spin.

The act of throwing the ball up is very important, and it must become automatic—that is to say, one must always be able, without thinking about it, to throw the ball up to just the height and position that suit one best. But to make what is really an art become a habit it is well worth while to practise systematically by oneself. To throw the ball to a height above one's head

equal to one's own height is correct for most services. If it is thrown higher, it necessarily comes down rather fast at the instant of impact, thus making a greater demand on the server's accuracy in timing; and if it is thrown lower than this, a free-swinging service cannot be made.

Some people, especially men, have plenty of facility in hitting an overhead ball at varying heights, and this tends to make them careless about the height to which they throw; but one cannot take too much trouble to get the service just right. It is the only stroke in lawn tennis for which one is allowed, within limits, to take one's own dispositions independently of opponents, and so presents an unique opportunity for advantage. In fact, in the doubles game especially, the server's side is now generally recognised to have a distinct advantage, other things being about equal; but this advantage can be, and often is, sacrificed through carelessness on the server's part.

#### THE RULES OF SERVICE.

Let us examine some possible and frequent forms of carelessness, in order to see how to get rid of them. First of all, the rules

of service must be strictly followed. The server must stand behind the base-line and within the limits of the centre line of the court and the far-side line produced in the case of the doubles game, or the near-side line in singles play. Many people forget or ignore this last rule, thinking that in singles they may serve from beyond the side of the singles court, and imagining also that they can get an advantage by so doing. But that is mere imagination, for in serving from beyond the side of the court they have further to hit, the ball takes longer in its flight, and the receiver thus has more time in which to prepare for his return.



Foot-faults are quite common, even in first-class play, and in lawn tennis of the garden-party type they generally go unpunished, unless by chance a delivery from about a yard inside the court evokes a mild protest. The letter of the law states—and it must be observed to the letter—that the server may neither run nor jump nor take a step when serving, and that one foot must be on the ground at the instant of impact, it does not matter which, and, of course, there is no legal objection to both feet being on the ground. But if the server keeps both feet down as he strikes, he loses some of his advantage, particularly in speed of movement towards the net or elsewhere after his delivery. If, on the other hand, he lifts his left foot too quickly, he is liable to bring it over the line before the ball has left his racket, and then, whatever happens to the ball, the service is a foot-fault. It is, of course, very difficult even for the umpire to tell for certain whether such a service is a foot-fault. The movements are very rapid, and a linesman is really the only possible arbiter of these cases. Even in tournaments the majority of matches are played without linesmen, partly because it is usually difficult to get people to volunteer for the job; but this should not make players careless about foot-faulting, for when a really important match comes—say, the final of an open tournament or a first appearance on the centre court at Wimbledon—to be foot-faulted, in addition to the general nervous tension of the situation, is about the most disconcerting thing that can possibly happen, and the player will have only himself to blame. The foot-fault rule has caused a good deal of heart-burning amongst lawn tennis players, who sometimes think that they have been harshly treated, or that there is a doubt in the matter, because it is difficult for the human eye to follow the movements exactly, and to be quite sure about the moment of impact in relation to the offending foot. However, the only thing that can be fairly said about it is that when there is doubt, the umpire, and not the player, is necessarily right, and that the player's remedy for such trouble is obvious, namely, to take such precautions as to put the possibility of foot-faults out of the question.

#### TAKE CARE AND DO NOT WASTE ENERGY.

Carelessness over service can do more harm than in any other department of the game. The moral effect of a sound,

consistent service is at least as great as its physical results, for it establishes a superiority and gives an impression of steadiness which it is extremely difficult for any adversary to counter. Therefore do not waste energy in slogging over a first service that is a fault nine times out of ten, and has to be followed by a second that is gentle in order to avoid losing the point outright. There is nothing more futile than this too common practice of slogging the first service. In the doubles game its bad effects are even greater than appears at first sight, for the server's partner is probably up at the net waiting and hoping for steady, strong deliveries from behind which will give him a chance of intercepting and, under favourable conditions, killing the return. If these are not forthcoming, his position at the net is useless. And yet mediocre players never seem to think of such things, but go on slogging and hoping that somehow or other the ball will go right. It is essential to acquire a first service that is correct more often than not; only then is it advisable to try and put on a lot of pace.

#### STRATEGY IN SERVICE.

The limits of the service court often seem somewhat small to the server, yet much can be done by judiciously placing the serve. Suppose you have against you a player who does not like backhanders. He or she will probably edge to the side of the court, giving the server an opportunity for a fast delivery far out and unreachable on the receiver's forehand side. The server, however, must have confidence in order to be able to do this, and confidence cannot be acquired by anyone who slogs first services that are nearly always faults. To deceive the receiver as to the direction in which the ball is coming, it is generally necessary to put on a certain amount of spin or cut, hitting the ball with the face of the racket inclined at an angle. Suppose that the receiver is in the left-hand court, and has edged away towards the side-lines, being afraid of a hard ball on the backhand, you can then, without altering the general direction of your swing, by twisting the racket a little, send the ball straight down the middle of the court, where, if it is reached at all, it will probably be returned in such a way as to enable you or your partner to make a winner with the next stroke. If, on the other hand, the receiver has a very long reach, so that you cannot get your service right away from him, it



is often sound policy to hit straight at him, as it is generally more difficult for a good player with a long reach to make a really fast return off a hard ball that comes straight at him than off one for which he has to reach out a little.

It is generally inexcusable to serve a double fault when the result is the loss of the game on that point; but if the score stands at 40-love or 40-15, it is sometimes permissible to take a risk with the second service. Circumstances may, and should, influence the service. The server must always bear the score in mind—a matter often neglected by the careless.

Another piece of strategy which can sometimes be practised with success is the deliberate serving of an unexpectedly soft ball on the first service. If it is a fault, the receiver comes in closer than usual, expecting another soft one for the second. The server then has a very good chance of making a winner with a hard second service, but to do this he must be steady and sure of himself. A very soft first service to one who is standing far back, expecting a hard one, will often bring forth a clumsy return that makes an opening for an incoming volleyer.

The onlooker at first-class lawn tennis is bound to conclude that there is almost infinite variety in service. Some people put on cut, others impart spin to the ball, whilst those who strike it squarely generally get the most pace on. A top spin, obtained by swinging the racket over the ball so that the strings draw upwards across it, is useful, particularly with the second service, in bringing it down within the limits of the service lines. Thus some people manage a second service that is not much less effective than their first. Mlle. Lenglen has great variety in her service, and M. Jean Washer, the Belgian champion, imparts a remarkable amount of top to his second delivery. But first of all I should advise the beginner to acquire a reliable service by striking the ball squarely, and to keep it as the basis for further developments, or to fall back on, should other methods prove unprofitable.

I cannot emphasise too strongly the necessity for taking trouble over the service. In other departments of the game it is generally wrong to concentrate on one particular stroke to the neglect of others, but a highly efficient service can definitely raise a player's class.

*In a further article in the next number Miss McKane will deal with overhead play, volleying and other details of stroke production.*



## REINCARNATION.

**O**H, tell me, did you never meet  
Some stranger-face along the street  
That to your startled eyes did seem  
The answer to an urgent dream?

And tell me, have you never heard,  
In some light talk of friends, a word  
Fall through the silence like a stone,  
Which echoed for your ears alone?

O dreaming Life! O living Dream!  
Is all your beauty, then, a gleam  
That unaware the spirit sees  
Across forgotten centuries?

BRIAN HILL.



# FEAR OF DEATH

By PHILIP G. CHADWICK

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

COMRADESHIP in a wife was Jim Hammond's ideal, and he was the kind of strong man who wants either to marry his ideal or not marry at all. He stood looking down at his wife Esther, as she brooded by the window, and cursed himself silently for what he had done, and her for having let him do it.

"I thought you liked all this sort of thing," he said, complainingly. His big hand indicated the meagre sealing-station below, the rock-bound coast and dreary waters of the Atlantic. "Dash it all, I gave up our bear-shooting expedition and that idea of a tour in Alaska, and came up here, where you've a decent house, and there's no more danger than in Hyde Park, so that I could at least have a bit of shooting with Ken Burgess, and now you complain of the loneliness and the half-breeds and—Heaven knows!"

"I haven't complained," she murmured weakly.

"Well, you show it," he said.

She did not answer—it was all too true. Jim's whole heart was in the wilds, his one idea of life hunting, exploration, adventure, and she was the girl he had chosen to share it with him. Less than a month ago, before they were married, the adventurous future he had planned had seemed like fairyland to her cramped mind. But the reality! She shuddered.

"I'm a coward, Jim," she whispered. "I was fascinated by your tales; I didn't understand. And I thought love would help me to live up to you. It only makes me frightened for your safety."

Her blue eyes, which faced the fact of her failure as he could not, but quailed before physical danger in a way both crushing and perplexing to him, looked up to meet his brave eyes. She tried to smile, but only made weak tears come. To conquer herself she continued speaking haltingly, imaginatively.

"I'm like this room," she said; "I'm cosy and safe and coddled. The only adven-

tures I like are in books or what I see from the window. You're like that little lighthouse out there—a brave thing standing alone on a rock."

"Yes," he said, and examined the quaint old wooden structure she pointed to. A mile or more away to the north it stood crowning the summit of a high, isolated rock. "Yes," he said, appreciating the simile.

The whole wild seascape thrilled him. Sea-birds keened and circled over the rough-set cluster of shacks, the drab sky faded into gloom and blackness at the horizon, and down on the wooden quayside women stood with anxious eyes fixed on a couple of fishing boats which made a gradual zigzag course to land, racing the coming storm. His thoughts swung back to his wife with an unpleasant start, and his suppressed rancour almost broke loose. This glorious beast that was the sea! And she was nervous of it, frightened of its mere impotent rage. If he had known!

Controlling himself, he changed the subject clumsily, but there was little else of interest than their own growing estrangement, and within five minutes the uncomfortable silence of minds in disagreement had fallen again.

"Mr. Burgess has noticed that something's wrong," said Esther suddenly.

"I know; I told him," said Jim, and as if trying to defend an unexpected weakness: "He's my oldest friend, and he understands women; I don't."

"What does he say?" Esther asked incuriously.

"He seems to agree with you. I mean he says I'm wrong. He says you'll get over it. What *was* it he said? 'Nervousness isn't cowardice any more than nervelessness is bravery.' I don't see it. And I never said you were a coward."

"No."

"But I should be if I did what you want. What *do* you want me to do? Settle down in a town all my life? Become a City man



or something? I couldn't stick it; I should die." Resenting his own bitterness, he still persisted in it. "Don't you think that wild sea—great?" he asked almost pathetically.

"I hate it!" said Esther. "And I *am* a coward. If you were dying, Jim, and wanted my help, I shouldn't come. I don't mean I shouldn't want—I don't think I *could* come. I should—oh, I don't know!" She shivered as the wind rose to a dreary howl. It was like a hungry wolf whining and searching round the heavy timbered house.

Dr. Ken Burgess, their host, entered and, perceiving something wrong, began to talk energetically. It was a good-intentioned mistake which he frequently made, for Hammond, if allowed to grumble himself into a better humour, would usually give in at the end, but to interrupt him was to leave his temper to feed on itself unsatisfied.

He gloomed round the room as Ken Burgess chatted, stood staring out of the window at the grey leaping waters of the ocean, mouched to the fire and stared at that a while, then finally, with some mumbled excuse, left the room.

Esther smiled rather wanly at the Doctor. "He'll soon get over it," said Burgess comfortingly; "it is the storm that's upset him. Makes him excited and aching to do something. He always was like that. I am—a little."

Jim returned through doors that slammed heavily in the rising wind. Staring at Esther and Burgess uncertainly, he announced that a couple of boats were putting out to stand by in case of need, then stood glaring out of the window a moment.

"I'm going," he said sullenly. He was like a spoilt child, determined to have his way, and determined to make trouble in any case.

Esther went very white. Beyond her husband she had a glimpse of the foam-crested sea; the double windows rattled violently in the wind.

"No, Jim," she said hoarsely, and he swung round impatiently. "You mustn't—oh, you mustn't!" she cried, and clung to him appealingly.

Roughly shaking her off, he gave way in a petulant outburst of temper. "You'd let a man drown sooner than get your feet wet!" he raved. "Well, I'm not asking you to help. I won't ask you to go anywhere again. You can stay at home, and I'll go where I

want. But I'm hanged if you're going to turn *me* into a coward!"

"You *are* a coward," she snapped, "to talk to me like that!" A foolish, defiant, little woman, and a big, sullen, foolish man—that was how Ken Burgess saw them.

But he did not know what to do. He stood fidgeting in his slippers, making feeble interruptions: "Now, look here, you two—" They paid no attention.

Esther broke down with a big sob and huddled up on the couch. "I'll go home," she wept, "I'll go home—to-night!"

"You daren't," Hammond sneered.

She continued to cry whilst he crossed to the door and stood hesitating there.

"I'm going," he said abruptly, and disappeared.

He did not go. He returned within the hour, morose and bitter, having spent the time on the wharf, staring seawards with the stolid women and half-breeds.

Esther kept to her room, so he had to content himself with the—for once—irksome company of Burgess at tea, after which he endeavoured to read, hoping that she would come, or that he could think of some excuse to go to her.

Night had come early, a night of lowering clouds and excitement. At any other time Jim Hammond would have gloried in the howling wind, in the grim thunder of breakers and the dense blackness which held them. But this night there was a greater storm in his soul; unknowingly he was passing through an adventure which even he could not relish. He was up against an unknown danger, the thing that breeds fear, yet the experience brought him no understanding of Esther, to whom all dangers were unknown and fearful.

Ken Burgess's reluctant voice broke into his brooding thoughts. "Have you ever been afraid of death, Jim?"

Hammond was again at the window, staring outwards at the darkness; he thrilled responsively as the wind rose to a dull roar. A great night! A ruined night!

"No," he said briefly. Afraid of death? He thought of the boatful of hardy sealers out once more somewhere in that chaotic blackness. To be deprived of such an experience! Bitterly he watched the steady light on the little wooden lighthouse away to the north, a small point of brightness on its wind-swept rock. She had compared it to him. But it was helping, whilst *he* was doing nothing.



Burgess's voice recommenced sympathetically. "It's rough on you, I know," he said, "but doesn't it occur to you that she may have any amount of pluck when put to the test? It's your habit of mind to seek danger; she's a woman—if you know what that means."

Hammond shrugged his shoulders resignedly. This interminable discussion—hadn't it all been thrashed out before?

"She needn't trade on it," he grunted; "I'm a man."

Burgess's temper slipped loose. "The sooner you lose that dashed one-eyed view of life the better," he snapped; "otherwise it's smash. If all you feel for her at present is a sort of bitter sympathy—good Heavens!"

Hammond turned to stare at his friend curiously. Old Ken in a temper?

"You talk of bravery as you'd talk of pride. No one is permanently brave; they're reckless, nerveless, fearless. Bravery is the conquest of fear, not the absence of it. Real courage follows on, is dogged by fear. Yes, fear. A man who never felt the fear of death does not know the meaning of courage. It is——"

He broke off as a loud knock sounded on the door, rose hurriedly, and left the room. There was a sudden fierce, cold draught, then the door banged violently. Voices in the passage. Burgess returned.

"The light-keeper's had an accident," he said; "I'm going out to his house on the cliff—somehow. This darn wind!" He glanced up from lacing his boots to stare at Hammond. "And the man says there's some trouble about the lighthouse, too. Will you find out about it? There's a chap somewhere—I've forgotten his name—who knows about it, though he's probably at sea. Anyway, find out. It'll be something for you to do." He saw the light which suddenly lit the other's eyes, and, despite all he had said, there was an answering light in his own. The love of adventure was his also. Picking up his bag from the couch, he was gone.

Hammond was on his feet as the door banged thunderously. A minute later, a muffled figure in oilskins, he had followed.

In the shadow of the clustered dwellings on the quayside the few villagers huddled together, taking what shelter they could. A cold, wind-driven rain beat on them, storm lanterns swung rattling here and there. Far out to sea a light shone, disappeared, shone once more fitfully, and, as though in

sympathy with it, the bright eye of the little lighthouse wavered and grew dim. It brightened and dwindled again.

Some reluctant thought of Esther arose in Hammond's mind, but he repelled it and it died. What Esther thought or what he thought were minor questions when possibly lives hung on his immediate action. He addressed the crowd with hands cupped over his mouth.

"Does anyone know anything about the lighthouse?" he bawled, and a number of confused voices answered. The crowd was composed entirely of women and children and a few hunched old fishermen. Most of the men were absent with the sealing fleet, and of the others, some were out on rescue work and others, fresh from the sea, were in the saloon recuperating. Nor was Hammond in a mood to accept help if it had been offered: all he wanted was definite information, and then he would do the job himself, if there were a job to do. He knew he must do something, and this was better than nothing.

They gathered round Hammond in a little, anxious, jabbering group, talking of the fishing boats and of a cargo boat which had been sighted southwards. He gathered that old Brunné—who lived out on the cliffs and attended to the lighthouse, filled up the tank and cleaned the lantern when necessary—had been taken ill or had an accident, and had sent his son down to the village to tell them. And it looked as though he had neglected the lamp. They all talked at once, and seemed to be looking to him for help. There was a man, Gangshaw, who should have been there. Apparently he was not there. And Hammond did not want to find Gangshaw—he wanted to do it himself.

He gazed northwards at the flickering lamp. "Can it be reached better by the beach than the cliffs?" he asked.

"Tide's not up yit," said an old bent man. "If yer goes 'long beach an' over the rocks, 'll do't, sure. Mebbe y' understands 'em, eh?"

"I'll fiddle it out," said Hammond.

Esther was forgotten. He left the little crowd in its sheltered corner and battled against the sudden wind to where a wooden stairway led downwards. Action!

A great comfort descended on him as he set out, the comfort of doing, and all the trouble and quarrelling of the day passed from him.

With the wind buffeting him about and



the driving rain numbing the right side of his face until it felt as though it were dead, he made his way along the rough beach, walking mostly, but sometimes running with long, eager strides. At times he had to pick his way carefully over the slimy irregular rocks, and twice nearly fell.

Half a mile or more he plodded on, the lighthouse still showing its fitful warning, serving at least to guide him in the right direction. Then, with a great splash, he was precipitated into a dark stretch of running water, and, soaked to the skin, struggled up again to be flung down once

throb of distant breakers came to him as the wind lulled.

He laughed. It was his way to laugh in extremity. All this wilderness of soundful darkness excited him, stirred him to forgetfulness of everything but the joy of fighting. So he fared onwards away from the village lights, battling with fierce pleasure against wind and rain and the waves which ever and anon strove to throw him down.

Once, just before he reached the rusty iron ladder which led upwards to the darkened lighthouse, he gave one ankle a



"So he fared onwards . . . battling with fierce pleasure against wind and rain and the waves which ever and anon strove to throw him down."

more by an incoming wave. Scrambling on all fours, he crawled on to the slippery rocks and cast about for his bearings. But the guiding light was gone now, and darkness surrounded him, darkness full of the hungry roar of the advancing tide.

Lights tossed and disappeared out at sea. Landwards the shacks of the village gleamed like a cluster of glow-worms, but there was no light for him who stood perilously on the lonely rocks with the eager, unseen waters spreading round. Spray dashed up into his face, and the backwash gurgled and chuckled in the rocky crannies beneath him. The dull

nasty twist, but that was all in the game, and he limped forward into the deeper shadow of the big rock with spirits still high. A few minutes' search sufficed for him to discover the ladder. Once on the top he knew he would be safe, and, if necessary, he could wait there till the tide receded. But his ankle ached badly as he mounted rung by rung, and he was glad when he could fling himself down for a short rest on the cold, uneven rock, and know that the struggle was over.

A bleak, eerie perch. The wind seemed to thrust at him with great, unseen hands, the



rain stung his numbed face to renewed pain. But the frothing sea was far below, helpless for all its vast power.

He was already at the door of the old wooden tower which served as lighthouse before the truth of his headlong escapade came to him. Out to sea the lights of a steamer beat steadily across the waves, died and returned differently placed. That must be the cargo boat he had heard mentioned. His accustomed eye did not like the set of the lights—they suggested that the ship was coming too near the shore. Though too far away to be certain, with the wind as it was, disaster seemed all too likely if something were not done, and he had risked himself down there amongst the rocks to no purpose. He had forgotten, in the hurried necessity for action, that the lighthouse would be locked.

Pressing himself flat against the door, he set his rather excited wits to work. The obvious course was to break the lock. To one side a little lean-to shed projected from the main building, and he edged round towards this, hugging the wall closely, for the wind was likely to send him staggering at any moment, and only a few yards away the rock dropped sheer on every side. The rickety door opened to his thrust, and he went fumbling round in the darkness amidst rusty lamps and fishing tackle. He ought to have brought a lamp.

His hands discovered a short iron bar and a mallet, and he returned with these, leaving the little shed rocking and creaking in the wind.

The door was less substantial than he had feared. For only a few moments the lock resisted his efforts to lever it open, then the wood of the jamb cracked away suddenly, and door and Hammond swung inwards. He collapsed with mingled curses and laughter. Like a bass organ pipe opened, the whole structure rumbled to the sudden inrush of wind; the aged boards screamed, and there was a murmurous clatter of things falling somewhere above.

He rose to his feet and stumbled up the creaking stairs. "Some lighthouse!" he muttered.

In the tiny lantern-room he paused for a moment to gaze down at the dim motley of the tumbled ocean; then, having located the steamer and become even more dissatisfied as to the direction it was taking, he glanced round in search of a lamp. That was simple—one hung on a hook ready to his hand; the problem was in his box of

matches—soaked, of course, from one of his many falls.

He tried a dozen or more, rasping fruitlessly on the sandpaper, before he bethought himself that there might be matches with the lamp, and found them hidden behind it. Taking another glance seawards, he lit the wick, and turned his attention to the clumsy, inefficient lantern which stood between the distant ship and possible disaster.

It was a simple enough contrivance, with a stationary reflector on the landward side, practically an enlargement of the storm-lantern he held in his hand; but it was cold and chilly to the touch, and though he twisted the wick regulators up and down, nothing appeared above the rims of the slots.

"Cogs or something gone," he mumbled. "Jove, but it's cold!" He drew on his gloves again, which he had previously discarded, and beat his arms across his chest for a space. Dashed if he could see with such a rotten light! And if the wicks wouldn't budge, or the feed-pipe was blocked, or anything like that, he wouldn't be able to do a thing inside an hour—not if he'd an arc lamp to work by.

He stood with a queer half-smile on his face, looking at the dipping forelight of the cargo boat. The wind roared by, and the building quivered and jarred beneath his feet.

Then an idea occurred to him—a big, romantic idea, full of appeal. He shouted "Eureka!" at the top of his voice and, with swinging lantern, dashed down the stairs. Two-thirds of the way down his lame ankle twisted, the lamp was jerked from his hand, and he fell sideways and rolled to the bottom.

It was some while before he realised what had happened. His head buzzed painfully, and one arm seemed to be in the jaws of some unseen beast which tore and bit at it excruciatingly.

With mind working dully he sat where he was, trying to recollect things. The ship? It had been quite a long way off; yes, that was all right. His thoughts moved again, and he realised that one minute or thirty made no difference now, for no longer could he carry out that brainy idea of his. If the ship were going to strike, then nothing could prevent it.

The open door in front of him clattered horribly in the wind, the bitter air swirled round him, and, as he shivered, the pain in



his arm danced anew. What a fool's position to be in! Sitting with one hand pressed over his aching brow, he did not see the door cease swinging, nor the short, lumpish figure which entered.

It came as a vast surprise to hear Esther's voice.

He had not thought of her for an hour, and there she was, a tremendously muffled little creature kneeling at his side, sobbing as when he had last seen her.

"What the devil, Esther—" he ejaculated, and suddenly shivered with a cold that was not in the wind. Esther on this bleak summit in danger!

"I had to come!" she whimpered. "I couldn't leave you. I was on the quay when you went, Jim. You're hurt, Jim. Jim!"

"You shouldn't have risked yourself," he said harshly, and "I know I'm hurt. Crushed my arm, I think, or broken it. Fell down the blasted stairs." He felt suddenly irritated that she had accomplished that risky journey along the shore—how in the world had Esther done that?—or irritated by her mere presence. He did not know which, but temper surged in him. He could have cursed her violently for adding to his already insuperable difficulties, but did not; that odd coldness gripped him again, and he touched her and pulled her towards him.

She mumbled something about darkness and water and climbing the ladder, then ceased, staring through the darkness at him helplessly. "I was afraid to come," she whispered, "but I was more afraid to let you go alone."

Another problem for him. Alone he had been all right, but what if something dangerous were to happen now? Was he becoming afraid—for her?

She gulped brokenly and said: "There's a ship out at sea."

Irritation gripped him again. An idiotic, obvious remark. He told her roughly to relight the lamp, and, as she searched for the matches, explained that the lantern could not be repaired. How clumsy she was!

The light burnt up. "We must do *something*," she said. "They'll be drowned." She seemed more controlled now that they were together again. "Why not set fire to the building?" she asked.

"I've thought of that," said Hammond. "Well?"

"What about us?" he snapped. "I

was going to do it when I fell. But I can't get down the ladder like this. And the tide's cut us off, anyhow."

"What about—them?" she asked tonelessly. He caught a glimpse of her fur-framed face, a white little face with big eyes staring in horror as if at her own thoughts.

"We should be roasted alive." They stared at each other. "No, there must be another way, Es. I could lash you to the ladder, and perhaps I could hang on when I'd finished." He knew he could not, and she knew it. "Someone has to die, Esther, but I'll see that you're safe." He felt his brow to be wet, and his eyes dimmed and grew dizzy. What was wrong with him? Was this fear, the fear of death?

She gazed at him blankly, thinking of the ship sailing confidently to its doom with lights bravely shining. Ten minutes, and there would be no ship, only the rending of wood and metal, and the puny, lost voices of the drowning. Jim was right: when the time came, one had to die to save others, and if one had never faced danger before, then one might fail. That was what he had meant all along. She wondered why she did not fail now, why it seemed so clear that Jim must sacrifice himself. Perhaps God took charge of such things, giving courage to cowards.

"I'd sooner stay," she said.

He glared up at her impotently. "You'll go," he snarled, "or, by Heaven, Esther, the ship can smash!"

Groaning, he stumbled to his feet, towering over her, his lips twitching from anger and the pain in his arm.

"Yes, yes, Jimmie," she sobbed, "anything, so long as you save them!" and supported him into the wind-swept open.

"Crouch down!" he bawled. Like two old bowed squaws in their lumpish garments they crept across the little plateau. Icy spray drenched them at intervals, the wind was like a great rubber wheel driving over their backs.

Hammond had to feel for the cliff edge with his fingers, a dreadful groping in the dark. To think of lashing Esther to the ladder was lunacy. A one-armed man, and she almost frozen with fear and cold—she would be torn away before she achieved what slight shelter the rock afforded. Nor could he find the ladder. It should have been here.

As he fingered with his one hand along the edge, something suddenly struck at him out of the darkness like a huge flail. There





"Like a host of demons, blazing oil ran out from the doorway and spread across the rock."

was a ring of metal on stone, and the thing was gone again. Shivering, he backed away from the edge, clutched hold of Esther, and crawled back to the lighthouse.

"The ladder's broken away," he said, and sat down on the bottom step with his head in his hands. "The wind's ripped it loose. We couldn't have done it, anyway." He broke into a cold sweat and huddled down; there was a thought at the back of his mind which held him moveless.

He did not face the thought clearly; it came as a great blank cloud over him, smothering thought and action. In imagination he lit the great torch which would save the ship sailing blindly to destruction below; he saw the two little figures that crouched together in the growing heat, and, as it became intolerable, ran hither

and thither madly, and finally plunged downwards to the tossing sea. Was it his own death he feared? Esther's death?

He looked up, but Esther was not there. A movement behind the steps located her, and he rose and limped round.

"The ship," she said, and indicated a little window. She was busy with the lantern, but he did not comprehend; instead, he turned to stare outwards and downwards.

Like a dark picture in a frame the hull of the ship stood out on the tumultuous waters. A few more minutes, and the end would come. Yet there was no will in him, only those two little figures that ran screaming in his mind, and plunged down and down.



A light sprang up behind, and he turned to stare stupidly.

"You shan't!" screeched Esther, and dashed the open lantern on to the growing pool of oil that oozed glistening from the

suddenly turn and dip as engines were reversed at this outburst of fire from nowhere and it fought to alter its course. But they were watching the beacon.

Like a host of demons, blazing oil ran out



"Partially shielded from the wind by a projection of rock, they crouched together."

tank. She thought, from the glare in his eyes, that he would prevent her even as once she would have prevented him.

But he was only staring stupidly, thinking of death. There his thought grew before him, grew into a hilarious, dancing reality, cackling with laughter at its victims.

The building swayed around them, the flames lapped eagerly at the worm-eaten woodwork, then rose on the forced draught from the door into one sudden flickering spire. She dragged him out into the wilderness of night, and once more they crawled across to the edge. Had they looked they would have seen the lights of the cargo boat

from the doorway and spread across the rock. Flames exuded from all points of the tower, combined into a shivering pillar of gold and grey as the wind fell, then lashed downwards to the sea as once more it rose and roared its wrath at this new enemy.

Partially shielded from the wind by a projection of rock, they crouched together. There was one last act to be performed, yet even when the flames swung down and over them, burning their faces and the furs they wore, they made no movement. They



watched the burning oil spreading towards them, listened to the deafening music of flame and wind, both calm now.

Jim turned to stare at his wife in the blinding glare. Her face was haggard and sweaty, and her eyes gazed vacantly at the flames, reflecting their red glow. He pulled her closer and kissed her, and she responded feebly.

"Please God——" he whispered, and shuffled back against the hurricane to the cliff edge. As though it would thrust him into the furnace, the wind fought against his movement, and he was suddenly enwrapped in a thundering whirlpool of air. The flaming lighthouse staggered before him, waving tentacles of fire.

Through all the pandemonium of sound he heard its charred and decayed foundations rending as the wind tore at it. One side seemed to slip away, flaring boards flew upwards like dragons in flight. Clinging to Esther with his one hand, he was trundled forward towards the reeling building. There came a moment of blinding light, and then a swift darkness lit here and there by little red flames.

Somewhere below the wreckage of the old lighthouse flamed downwards to the

sea. On the cliff-top lanterns swung, clanking, and voices shouted hoarsely to one another. Heavy, glistening figures descended to the beach and, roping themselves together, struggled out amongst the rocks. The wind lulled.

Jim Hammond, holding Esther very close, scrambled back to the projecting snag.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Good Heavens," said Ken Burgess, "they're quarrelling again!" He opened the door quietly to look at his patients.

"I tell you," Hammond was saying, "we're going straight back to England. Old Ken was right when he said that bravery is the conquest of fear, so I'm going to be brave for once in my life and conquer my dread of the city."

"He wasn't," said Esther calmly; "it's just a matter of chance. And we're going west to shoot bears, so there, though I expect I shall faint when I see one. *Don't* try to kiss me, Jim, or you'll loosen your bandages."

Ken Burgess closed the door silently. "Bravery," he murmured, "is the conquest of self. But it's darn cold out here without a fire."

## THE ETERNAL ECLOGUE.

**T**HE larks above the stubble  
Are loud with lyric mirth,  
But under them blind trouble  
Goes tapping round the girth  
Of all the earth.

If any man walk singing  
Beside a lowland stream,  
Eyes that the tears are stinging  
Glance after him and seem  
To mock his dream.

And if a man sit lonely  
Upon a wayside stone,  
He hears his own sighs only,  
Nor knows them for his own,  
There all alone.

But should a hand be lying  
In his with love and trust,  
There is no further crying  
Against the bitter crust  
And driving dust.

Nor shall he hear a singer  
And envy him his song,  
Nor by deep water linger,  
Nor brood upon a wrong  
The whole day long.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.





“‘Advance, pig of an elephant!’ cried M. Onésime desperately. . . . ‘*Crétin Imbécile!* Advance lest I destroy thee.’”

# TOMAI AND A DRAGON

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

THE bridge at Montbaoron is one of the oldest in France, dating from the times of Peter the Hermit, and second in fame only to that of Avignon. It is the more picturesque that, with the fear of the taxpayer in its mind, local officialdom has done nothing in the way of repairs to it since the days of Napoleon, and there are those who hold it unsafe for heavy traffic. Tomai agreed with them. As soon as he saw the bridge before him, he stopped dead, thereby forcing the whole procession of motor-caravans and horse-

lorries to halt behind him, so that the narrow street was blocked from end to end. Tomai put his head meditatively on one side, extended first his trunk and afterwards a tentative front foot, and, having come to a decision, trumpeted aloud as formal declaration that no power on earth should force him to trust his two tons or so of body upon any support so patently precarious.

M. Onésime Tiburenque, who was the sole proprietor of the Cirque Tiburenque, protested, swore, tore his flowing beard, and finally wept, all without having any effect



upon Tomai, who showed no further emotion than by opening his huge mouth for the receipt of any largesse bystanders might care to bestow. Jean Gebierge—professionally, Ali Ben Mustapha—who acted as mahout, did not even attempt to argue with him. He knew Tomai too well. Tomai, you must know, was not an Indian name, though borne by an Indian elephant, but the customary local pronunciation of the English Tommy, for Tomai, before coming to France, spent some time across the Channel, where he acquired his name and, it may be, some of that phlegmatic obstinacy for which he was noted.

“Advance, pig of an elephant!” cried M. Onésime desperately. “Beast of a beast! Monster of a *saligaud*! *Crétin*! *Imbécile*! Advance, lest I destroy thee!” Tomai, as though to show how little the prospect of destruction moved him, only turned the uplifted red cavern towards the other side of the street, with one piggish little eye hopefully upcast towards a young woman peering from a window in the last house before the bridge.

“Advance, precious poppet!” cried Mlle. Camille Levy—professionally known as the Raneé of Pudicota—who presided at Tomai’s ring performances, though, indeed, he knew their routine too well to need guidance. She had been hurriedly sent for, from her repose in the last living-caravan of the procession, in view of the emergency. “Advance, little cabbage of my heart, and only see what a reward shall be thine!” She rubbed him ingratiatingly behind his left fore-leg. But Tomai was as adamant to blandishments as to threats; as well might M. Onésime and Mlle. Camille have sought to tempt the Tour Eiffel to cross the Seine.

The affair was serious. It was the opening day of the Foire of Montbauron, the fair ground was on the other side of the river, and the circus tent still to be erected. Where Tomai refused to venture, his three smaller compatriots, Jacquai, Billai, and Rose, would equally draw back, for they followed his lead in all things, usually, when not required for haulage purposes, in single file, each holding fast with extended trunk to the tail of his predecessor. There was the added bitterness that this act of rebellion was not done in a corner, as Oliver Cromwell would have put it, but in the full sight of such citizens of Montbauron as were abroad at that early hour. What would such onlookers think of a performance, proclaimed

as including the Most Marvellously Trained Troupe of Immense Imperial Pachyderms in the Habitable Universe if Tomai himself, the star performer, thus openly refused allegiance?

There was but one thing to be done. It was impossible to leave the procession in the street; it was impossible for it, as a whole, to go round any other way, for it was already past dawn, and much remained to be done before the opening performance in the evening, and the nearest alternative bridge was ten miles down stream. Tomai and Billai and Jacquai and Rose must be unharnessed from the caravans they had drawn from Marigny-le-Sec and sent round by way of Bernay-le-Pont. (Heaven send they might not jib at that bridge also!) In the charge of Ali Ben Mustapha and one of the grooms, they could easily cover the twenty miles in time for their first appearance.

Thus it came about that shortly after midday Tomai and Billai and Jacquai and Rose were following a narrow footpath across the lower end of the little valley which is locally known as the Valley of the Dragon, though its official style is the Val de l’Etang, because of the lake or pool which it enshrines. Its popular name comes also from the lake, which is very deep and very blue and rather gloomy, being shrouded in a thicket of tall pine trees, where once, it is believed, witches held their *sabbat* with the Devil himself in attendance. And though the witches may have been routed by the local clergy, they left something very alarming indeed behind them, no less than a loathsome monster, monstrous and horrible, who lurks in the lake, waiting to snatch at passers-by, being, as some believe, the Evil One in person, imprisoned there by the good Saint Éli of Pourges for all eternity. No one has ever seen the loathsome shape and lived to tell the tale, but its existence is an article of faith, and has been this last five hundred years from Montbauron to Bresac, and from the pleasant banks of the Cérones to the bleakest summit of the Col des Neiges, which overlooks the river valley.

Naturally Tomai and Billai and Jacquai and Rose knew nothing of this, or they might have approached the lake less eagerly. Ali Ben Mustapha might have heard of it, for it was not his first visit to the neighbourhood, and so might his colleague Coquelicot, who was one of the eleven incomparably Mirth-Compelling Clowns attached to the Cirque Tiburenque. He had little knowledge of



the mahout's art, but he was a friend of Ali Ben, and had offered to share his duties out of friendship. Actually neither of them were thinking of the Dragon Lake just then, or, indeed, of anything at all. Ali Ben occupied the broad forehead of Tomai, but not in the cross-legged attitude invariable in mahouts. Instead, he was stretched across it, his own head dangling on one side and his feet on the other, while Tomai performed prodigies of nasal gymnastics in securing that he should not fall on one side or the other. Coquelicot was on his feet, though insecurely. One arm was cast about the neck of Rose, the smallest of the troop, and just of a height to give it lodgment, for never was there a smaller example of the immense pachyderm anywhere in the habitable universe, so much so, indeed, that she might well have gone in double harness with a Shetland pony without exciting ribaldry. Her patience and perseverance were at once manifest in the firmness with which, though frequently almost overthrown by the lurchings of M. Coquelicot, she yet never once relaxed her hold upon the stumpy tail of Jacquai as he walked before her.

The Valley of the Dragon is not on the direct road from Montbauron to Bernay-le-Pont, which runs the whole way beside the river. It is, instead, three miles due north of Montbauron, whereas Bernay is ten miles due east. But there were reasons for the change of direction. Firstly, the river road is a Route Nationale much frequented by farmers' gigs and racing motor-cars. Now, while horses fear nothing so much as elephants, elephants have a rooted mistrust of scorching automobiles, whence it behoved Ali Ben to seek some route, if less direct also less busy. Also there was the matter of lunch, and, as it happened, a hundred yards from where they left the Route Nationale stood the wayside *café* of the Triumphs of Agriculture. A very pleasant *vin-du-pays* grows in the district of Montbauron, and the no less pleasant, though more potent, liqueur of the Augustins is also a local product. Accordingly, when the journey was resumed, Tomai was in sole charge, and his the choice of route. That route remains to this day unknown, or only traceable at intervals where the travellers broke down a wall to refresh themselves on grapes, or harvested a field of Indian corn in passing, or stampeded a herd of the big white oxen that were the heart's pride of M. Raoul Pelletier, the eminent agriculturist. So at last, shortly

after midday, they found themselves approaching the shadowy banks of the pool where lurked the Dragon. Actually they did not approach it altogether unobserved, for their progress was watched from a little distance by a girl in a white dress, who, after considering them for a time with surprise not unmixed with alarm, came suddenly to a decision, and hurried away down the grassy slope that led to the farm of the Quatre Vents. Had Tomai noticed her in passing, and realised that she was the daughter of old Nicholas Amiot of Quatre Vents, surliest of men, upon whose land he was even then trespassing, he might well have changed his course. But Tomai knew nothing of the law of trespass, and the little procession held steadily upon its way.

Tomai, scenting the water, stopped, thrust forward his trunk and then his ears, considered. It was intensely hot—stifling, indeed, in the narrow valley—and the chance of a bath seemed heaven-sent. Nevertheless, Tomai, as conscientious as he was intelligent, hesitated. And just then, from above his head, came guidance. In the language of Tomai's ancestors, "Hrrmph!" is less a word than a whole vocabulary, if not indeed a language. Its meaning depends at once upon its accent, its intonation and its depth, so that it may represent the croodling of a love sonnet, the blare of a war horn, the sternness of negation, or the gentleness of persuasion. And the "Hrrmph!" which came from above the ears of Tomai expressed at once satisfaction and benediction.

Tomai lifted both his ears in an agony of expectancy. Again it came and in the same permissive intonation. And again and again. "Hrrmph!" it said. "Hrrmph! Hrrmph!"

Tomai hesitated no longer. With a grateful trunk he reached above his head, took Ali Ben very tenderly around the waist, and with infinite care deposited him on a green bank close to the water's edge, sheltered from the sun's rays by a flowering thicket from which reached heavenwards the dark needles of a monster pine tree.

Ali Ben sneezed comfortably, stretched out an arm as though permissively, turned over on his side, and burst again into the chorus that had so delighted the faithful ears of Tomai. "Hrrmph!" he said, not once, but many times in a measured cadence that rose and fell as might the sighing of the wind in the foliage above his head.

Tomai turned, waved an ear to little Rose, "Hrrmphed!" once in the note of command,



and thus signalled to Rose where she was to deposit the other slumbrous god, who, comfortably settled beside his friend, signified his pleasure in the same way as had he. By that time Tomai and Billai and Jacquai and Rose were all deep in the bosom of the pool, luxuriating in its pleasant coolness, casting splashing fountains over their burning

sonorous trumpeting of their masters that signified entire approval. All of which brings us to Margot and Maximilien.

Raoul Pelletier and Maximilien Laventie and quite a number of other young men would have told you that Marguerite of the Four Winds, daughter of Nicholas Amiot, the richest farmer and, perhaps, the crustiest



"Two great dark wings followed it, beating the water, and even as they looked, three other serpents raised their twisting bodies."

brows and gradually letting themselves slip down until, save a grey island which marked Tomai's back—for at its deepest the pool was not deep enough to cover him completely—nothing was visible but the tips of four trunks, just raised above the surface, much as are the fountain-nozzles in the Gardens of Versailles. And always from the cool shadows of the bank above them came the

of the countryside, was the most attractive girl in France. Others, fortunately, had other opinions, but there could be no doubt that Margot was very attractive indeed, so that if you wished to visualise her you have only to think of the most attractive young woman you know and, allowing for variations of complexion, you have her to the life. And among all her admirers no two



were more assiduous than Raoul Pelletier and Maximilien Laventie.

Raoul was the more eligible; he was probably second in wealth only to old Nicholas himself. It is impossible to say exactly—because no one in rural France nowadays ever says exactly how rich he is, having a rooted mistrust of tax collectors—

passed at a pinch for poetry, and, above all, he had lived in Paris and studied at the Sorbonne. He might even have fallen to the degree of *homme-de-lettres* had not his uncle, proprietor of the *Ville de Paris*, the largest department store in Montbaoron, offered him the position of assistant manager of the millinery department, with prospects which,



“‘No, no!’ she cried frantically, as a huge red cavern showed itself beneath the serpent.”

but he was certainly very well off. Also he was good-looking and knew it, and it was agreed that he would have done prodigies in the Great War had he not been the only son of a widow and possessed of political pull, and, as such, ineligible for active service.

Maximilien was not rich and not good-looking, but he had prospects. He was intensely in love. He could write what

as the old gentleman was a bachelor, were considerable.

Père Amiot very much preferred Raoul as a possible son-in-law, but, being wise in his generation, he made no attempt to coerce his daughter's affections. Margot, who had no objection to being admired, favoured neither suitor overtly, though together they stood well above all possible rivals. It may have been by pure accident; it may have been to gain data on which to base her decision, at least it happened that on more occasions than one Margot had met her



suitors—separately, well understood—in the Valley of the Dragon, which is about half a mile from the Farm of Quatre Vents, and had there strolled with them on the banks of the little lake, always at high noon or thereabouts, both out of regard for the *convenances* and because it was not exactly the place in which to find yourself at the approach of night. Nevertheless, it was with surprise mingling with his delight that on the morning of the opening of the Foire de Montbauron, Maximilien received a note, delivered by a farm-hand, to say that the lady of his dreams wished urgently to see him, and was awaiting him in the Valley of the Lake of the Dragon. He was at the moment writing out a new sonnet on gilt-edged paper from the Stationery Department, in the little hutch which he occupied by right of office, but he hesitated not a moment, and, without even waiting to announce his departure, leapt upon his bicycle and made off at full speed towards the rendezvous. Had he known that Raoul Pelletier had received a precisely similar note at about the same time, and was even then walking across the fields from his farm of Hêtres-Breuvage, he might have been less ravished; he would certainly not have decreased his speed.

Maximilien had further to go; a bicycle covers more ground than a man. Accordingly, as Margot waited under the big oak tree which marks the entrance to the valley, Raoul approached her from the right and Maximilien from the left almost at the same moment. They were not at all pleased to see each other, and for the moment it seemed that blows might even precede greetings. But Margot interposed.

"I have sent for you both," she said, "because I am very angry with both of you, and unless you give me an explanation I will never speak to either of you again."

The two young men regarded her with horrified eyes, but each wisely waited for the other to speak.

"I hear that you have insulted me—that you have dared to mention my name in some vulgar quarrel in a *café* in the town. It is unendurable!"

Again they looked at her appalled, the more naturally that the accusation was perfectly untrue, and again each waited for the other to reply.

Margot continued to regard them with the expression of an insulted queen. She felt no scruples at all, for what more cogent

reason could she have given for wishing to see them together and in such haste, yet how otherwise ensure the proper setting for the great experiment?

"I see that you dare not deny it, cowards that you are!" she went on. "Never will I forgive you, never!"

A very artistic tear sparkled on either eyelid, and she turned angrily from them and hurried up the half-trodden path which led to the lake. They followed her in mute and miserable protest.

She had almost reached the bank before she stopped again, just outside the ring of encircling shadow cast by the pine trees. "Have you, then, nothing to say for yourselves—no defence to offer? You, Raoul?"

"Only that such a thing has never happened. I—I quarrel with this—this fellow? Why, I could crush him with one hand!"

"And I, mademoiselle"—Maximilien pointed his words with one of his most Parisian bows—"I can only regret that what you say is incorrect. Otherwise this fellow would not be here to incommode you."

"*Vaurien!*" cried Raoul furiously.

"*Scélérat!*" replied Maximilien fiercely.

In a moment they would have been at each others' throats had not Margot again interfered. "Stop!" she cried. "You can be very brave when it is only a question of squabbling like boors in a market-place. As for me, that kind of bravery does not appeal. Listen, now!"

Greatly daring, Maximilien intervened to avert the blow. "Mademoiselle Margot," he said in the Parisian accent which was one of his attractions, "it is useless to ignore what is only too evident. We both love you. It is for you to choose between us."

"And how if I choose neither, Mr. Impertinence?" From the blue flash of her downcast eye it might have seemed that Margot was not altogether displeased with her position. "There are other men in the world, let me tell you. But, so far as it lies between you, I have only this to say. Your protestations do not interest me; they are too much alike, as is your bravery in threatening each other. As for me, I adore real courage. The one of you who proves to me—Hark! What is that?"

From somewhere in the shadows that overhung the pool came a curious hissing sound that was followed by a sudden disturbance of the water as though some great body had stirred beneath it. Margot



trembled very ostensibly. "It is—it is the Dragon of the Lake!" she stammered.

"Bah!" burst out Raoul rudely. "A tale for silly children! Let Maximilien fear such bogies. As for me, that for your dragon!" He picked up a stone which lay at his feet and flung it into the middle of the pool. Before the ripples had died away the challenge was accepted. The whole surface of the water was lashed to angry spray as from it emerged what in the shadow seemed the writhing body of a huge serpent. Two great dark wings followed it, beating the water, and even as they looked, three other serpents raised their twisting bodies above the tortured foam.

Raoul gave but one glance and, with a howl of terror, turned and fled from the horrid vision. Margot screamed as shrilly, if more musically, and also turned to fly. Maximilien alone kept his self-control. "Do not be afraid," he said calmly, though his voice may have trembled. "I will protect you. Walk slowly away lest you attract its attention. I will remain until you are in safety."

"No, no!" she cried frantically, as a huge red cavern showed itself beneath the serpent. "You shall not stay, you shall not! Come with me! I am afraid! Oh, I am afraid!" She caught at him so eagerly that he could not resist, and together they fled from the place of horror without one backward glance. Only after they had reached the oak tree, and could gaze down the long grassy slope over which the figure of Raoul was disappearing, did she stop and speak again. "Maximilien, my hero! You would have died for me! Instead, you shall live, O my husband!" And she fell, half fainting, into his arms.

It was not until they had passed the wicket-gate that leads into the upper vineyard at Quatre Vents that he found courage for what he had to say. "I cannot let you love me under false pretences," he told her, trembling. "I am not the hero you believe me. There was nothing to be afraid of—there in the valley."

"What do you mean?"

"This morning, very early, I could not sleep for thinking of you. I was trying to compose a poem that should tell you something of my love for you. To-day is the opening of the fair, and just after dawn the Cirque Tiburenque entered the town by

road. They passed beneath my window. There were four elephants, trained ones, and the biggest would not cross the bridge. They were sent round to cross by the bridge at Bernay-le-Pont. They were what we saw bathing in the Etang. I recognised them from their description in books of travel. You see, I am no more than an impostor."

Margot turned upon him eyes that were full of admiration. "I love you all the more," she told him, "that you have the courage—the true courage—to tell me the truth. That fellow Raoul would never have done so. Now, I, too, have a confession to make. I walked up towards the Etang this morning because I, too, was thinking—but I will not tell you of what. The four elephants passed me, and I followed them and saw where they went. So, you see, I am an impostor, too!"

"Then, oh, my precious angel—you meant—all the time——" And for the sixty-fourth time he caught her in his arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

Few animals can beat the elephant as a long-distance runner when he is put to it, whence it came about that Tomai and his train reached Bernay-le-Pont, crossed the bridge without demur, and so came to Montbauron again, if late, at least not too late to appear as the last turn of the first performance of the Cirque Tiburenque. And there, among the most prominent notabilities awaiting them, were M. Nicholas Amiot, of the Quatre Vents, with his daughter, and M. Georges Laventie, proprietor of the Ville de Paris, with his nephew and acknowledged heir Maximilien, come together in celebration of a treaty of high alliance which had been agreed upon that very afternoon, though not yet formally delivered. And when Tomai, seated beside his table, with one ponderous paw resting upon it, rang with uplifted trunk the hand-bell which should signal to the Raneé of Pudicota that he was awaiting his champagne bottle, you may be very sure that two hands sought each other under the friendly shelter of the box ledge, and that two hearts thrilled in unison their fervent wishes for health and long life to the Most Celestial of Imperial Pachyderms, the Slayer of Dragons and Cementer of Hearts.

But, of course, Tomai did not know that.



# CONSEQUENCES

By B. A. CLARKE

*Author of "A Free Hand," "Minnows and Tritons," etc*

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

"OVER the wall! Out!" cried Edward gleefully, which was rotten form, because although hitting over is out in back-yard cricket everywhere, the accident should be regretted by all concerned. Begin by rejoicing at knock-overs, and you will end by bowling for them!

I was justly cross with Edward, which is the most dangerous form of crossness, because when you begin a quarrel in the right, you go ahead so confidently that before you know it you have put yourself in the wrong. So it was this afternoon. In a breath I passed from righteous wrath to caddishly denying that I was out on the ground that this wasn't the kind of hitting over intended by the rule.

"And why isn't it, pray?" said Edward.

"Because that garden isn't out of bounds to me."

"When old Scarlet became bedridden, he had a way cut through from your back attic to his, to enable your mother to give an eye to him when his wife was out for any considerable time. But what of that?"

"It isn't mother only. I go through sometimes to see how he is."

"Supposing you do, the house isn't the garden. There you are as much a trespasser as ever."

I put out my tongue, not being able to think of a reply, and feeling that a grimaceless silence would be taken as an admission that Edward's argument was unanswerable, as, of course, it was. I realised this while I was climbing the wall. (In spite of my anger it hadn't occurred to me to dispute the universal rule that knocker-over climbs over.) From the top of the wall I admitted that I was wrong.

"Well, don't cry about it," said Edward cruelly, "or you won't be able to find the ball."

Jumping down angrily, and without

looking where I was landing, I broke a sunflower. A furious rapping came from the first-floor window, which then went up, revealing the Rev. Frederick Easthorpe, our Rector.

"Charlie Briggs," he shouted, "how can you be so wicked and unfeeling as to take advantage of a neighbour's helplessness to destroy his property? I am disappointed in you, Charlie, greatly disappointed. I am not surprised to find Edward West abetting you in it. This is the sort of thing we expect from him. Return to your own garden immediately."

I did so, and, having now no ball, and being still glared at by the Rector, we retreated to our spidery summer-house.

"I didn't mean to break anything," I gasped.

"Of course you didn't," said Edward. "Anyone but a born fool would have seen that it was just an accident. And why did he say that about me? What have I to gain by your smashing sunflowers? Old bully! He has always been my enemy. I have tried hard to love him, as you know, Charlie, but this puts the lid on. I give him up."

I thought this was dreadful, and racked my brain for some plea that would move Edward to give Mr. Easthorpe another chance.

Edward West, after six years as treble soloist, was sacked from our choir when his voice broke, although, because of the great glory his singing had brought to St. Jude's, he should have been carried until his man's voice came. In his dismissal Edward saw the hand of an enemy, and suspected the organist's wife. Circumstances just then making it possible for him to do her a good turn, he jumped at the opportunity, because he had never blessed those that persecuted him, owing either to lack of persecutors or inability to perceive them.

Having done the good deed, he learned



that not she, but the Rector had had him sacked, and for extreme sermon-restlessness. So now it was up to him to bless the Rector, and also to love him, which, as Mr. Easthope seemed to be getting on pretty well, for the moment, without his help, he resolved to do first.

"I should bar being helped by people who hated me," said my chum," so before doing anything for him I am going to learn to love him."

For a time nothing came of his efforts. Observation discovered good points and bad points that cancelled them. Edward gave the Rector a good mark for looking "the whole world in the face, for he owed not any man," to quote the words of the poet,\* and a bad mark for wearing a glass flower-holder, a practice that the curate had stamped out in the choir, declaring that it recalled "the worst sartorial excesses of the Victorian era." ("Sartorial" means to do with clothes; we looked it up.)

We trailed the clergyman at a Church sociable with the same mixed results. The poor man went thirsty, because as soon as he got a cup of tea he noticed and relieved some obscure person who was too shy to push his way through the crowd around the tea-urns. Jolly decent of him, of course. Edward was congratulating himself that at last he was getting a taste for the Rector, when we heard him greet Lady Sturgis and Mrs. Brand, two of St. Jude's chief supporters, both widows and, according to my mother, setting their caps at our tall bachelor clergyman.

"Oh, I am glad to see you, Lady Sturgis! I was afraid you weren't coming."

"Why, Mr. Easthope? I am in very good time. You advised me not to come to tea."

"I don't know why, but I had a feeling that you weren't coming."

She flushed with pleasure.

We followed him to the doorway, where Mrs. Brand was standing as if uncertain whether to advance any farther.

"Oh, Mrs. Brand, I am so glad to see you! I was afraid you weren't coming."

"Why?"

"I don't quite know why, but I had a feeling that you weren't coming."

"I am afraid you are a flatterer," said Mrs. Brand, smiling as if she was confident he wasn't.

I have rarely seen Edward so much upset.

"Is it very wicked to be a flatterer?" I whispered.

"It isn't only that," he said, "but he is putting ideas into their heads." And I judged from Edward's gravity that this was one of the worst things that a clergyman can do.

So now you know who we all are, and can understand how serious it was for Edward to give the Rector up.

"Please overlook it this once," I pleaded. "Remember he didn't know I had the run of next door."

"How can you say that?"

"Because this is his first visit there: He had never seen the Scarlets until to-day, nor heard of them until yesterday, when the Rev. Mortimer Mills, before starting on his holiday, asked him to sit with Scarlet for the next four Saturday afternoons."

"Where does Mr. Mills come in? Scarlet never went to his chapel, nor any other place of worship, and his wife is no better."

"He has the same doctor, and so heard about Scarlet's becoming bedridden, and that because of this tie his wife must give up her Saturday visits to a paralysed sister who is in a home for incurables. The paralysed sister only lived for these visits of Mrs. Scarlet, so Mr. Mills offered to come in every Saturday to set her free."

"Jolly decent of him, and jolly decent of our Rector to deputise for him!"

"Doesn't it help you to love him?" I asked.

"It proves that he is good, but I always knew that—a good beast! My feeling towards Mr. Easthope is an intensely respectful loathing."

"Mother says respect comes from hearing about good deeds and love from seeing them done. From the first she respected the Wesleyan minister for sacrificing his Saturdays; but when she saw him jovially playing old Scarlet's favourite game, 'I Love my Love with an A,' she could have kissed the dear man."

"That doesn't help me, Charlie boy. Your mother hadn't been booted out of a choir by Mr. Mills, so there was nothing to prevent her liking him. Besides, I haven't the run of next door as she has, and can't see Mr. Easthope with Scarlet."

"But you can, Edward, you can. Over the bedroom door is a ventilator——"

"Which I shall see when we get there, so it's waste of time describing it. Don't lose another second. For the mere fun of it I would walk miles to see the Rector of St

\* W. Longfellow, an American bard.



Jude's playing 'I Love my Love with an A,' and if, in addition, it makes me love him, the gain will be tremendous, because he is the only real enemy I have ever had, and it may be a long time before I find another."

We went indoors, took off our boots, and then crept up to our attic, and from this into our neighbour's through the communicating door Scarlet had had cut, thereby showing his great trust in Mother and me, for it was giving us the run of a house bursting with hidden treasure, to say nothing of suppressed wills and stolen title-deeds. Although Scarlet has never owned to being a miser, Edward and I knew it, not only from his nose and whiskers being like Fagin's in the illustrated "Oliver Twist," but also from his criminal practices before his illness, such as keeping balls when knocked into his garden and selling them to rag-and-bone men.

The attic being immediately over the sick-room, we crossed it on all fours, noiseless as cats, Edward, as he passed the chimney, looking up eagerly, as if expecting to see five-pound notes hanging down in festoons. Then we tiptoed down three stairs to where a turn in the staircase enabled us, through a ventilator, to look straight into the first-floor back bedroom. We were fairly safe, too, because the invalid's bed was pushed flush against the wall, which meant that the visitor would have his back to us, and as for the miser himself, his eyes were so dim that he could not have seen us if we had been bags of gold. They weren't playing "I Love my Love with an A," but another game even more putrid—Consequences! Putrid, that is, except at parties, when it is played thus: Each player writes at the top of a slip of paper an adjective, folds the paper so as to hide what he has written, and passes it to his right-hand neighbour. On the slip that he now receives from the player on his left he writes the name of a gentleman, conceals it by again folding the paper and passes it on. Similarly are added another adjective, a lady's name, the place where they met, what they said, and what they gave each other, the result of it all, and, finally, what the world said about it. Then these eleven tales, to each of which eleven authors have contributed, each ignorant of what the others have written, are read aloud amid much laughter and pretty confusion, because the lady named is almost sure to be present, and with good players the gentleman also. When there are saucy wits among the writers and jolly girls are the blushers, Consequences is as fine a

game as one can wish, but played by two unfunny men, each writing half every story, and knowing who has written the alternate passages, it is the ghastly limit.

We had arrived in the nick of time just as the writing of one pair had been completed.

"Your turn to read first!" cried Scarlet.

The Rector, who has an immense voice, but hollow like an over-ripe pear from which the centre has been scooped, cleared his throat.

"Ahem, Ahem! 'The patriotic Rev. Frederick Easthorpe met the progressively conservative barmaid of "The Red Lion" at the opening of Parliament. He said to her: "Come on the river with me this evening." She replied: "My only concern is the welfare of this great Empire." He gave her a kiss. She gave him the greatest compliment an orator can receive—the close attention of his audience. The consequence was she brought an action for breach of promise, and the world said: "The British Constitution, which has broadened slowly down from precedent to precedent——""

"Wake me when you've finished!" snarled the sick man.

"——secures the most perfect combination attainable of social stability with popular liberty.""

You can grasp what had happened. Scarlet had kept to malicious personalities, which had been rendered harmless by his victim's clever introduction of politics.

"Nice behaviour of yours, I must say, Mr. Easthorpe!" he cackled. "Well, now I will read the other. 'The flirtatious Minister of the Fine Arts——'"

"Hah! Very good indeed!" boomed the Rector. "'The flirtatious Minister of the Fine Arts'! Capital! Capital!"

"By Jove, I like him!" Edward whispered excitedly. "I really do."

It had come to him in a second, that love for his enemy that weeks of effort had failed to bring.

"Wasn't the Rector priceless?" said Edward, when we had crept away. "Well, now that I love him, there is nothing to delay my bringing brightness into his life, and I shall set about it at once."

The opportunity came through a Mr. Harold Mount. Although Mr. Easthorpe was very well connected, he had two extremely shabby second cousins, or, rather, first-cousins-once-removed, a brother and sister who lived together somewhere the other side of London. "Once removed," however, has nothing to do with where they



lived, but means that they were first cousins of his father, and thus almost inconceivably old. Harold was much the shabbier of the two, and it was believed that he stinted himself to indulge his sister Zenobia, who at times appeared in garments that the women decided must have cost more than her brother could afford. They visited St. Jude's on state occasions, when the Rector made a great fuss over them, introducing them to all the bigwigs, for he was so far from being a respecter of persons that he had halved his own income by abolishing pew-rents in order to give

returned to the cloakroom as we were helping his brother, Lieutenant-Colonel Easthorpe, D.S.O., out of his overcoat.

"Hullo, Fred!" said the Colonel. "What have you done with Harold? By the way, did you ever see such a guy as he has become? Of course, it is very noble of him to spend such a proportion of his pittance upon Zenobia, but, even so, he needn't come out quite such an object. For example, it wouldn't cost him anything to brush his coat."

"That, George, is precisely the attitude I have taken. I have every sympathy for



"Edward . . . looking up eagerly, as if expecting to see five-pound notes hanging down in festoons."

poor persons and strangers an equal share of the chief places.

On the Tuesday following the Rector's first Saturday at the Scarlets', a Royal Duke opened St. Jude's new parish hall, attracting many grand persons and Mr. Mount, looking wreckier than ever. His coat was green with age, and the silk hat he handed to us—Edward and I were in charge of the cloakroom—might have seen service as a football. Mr. Easthorpe greeted him genially, but suddenly a hard look came into his eyes, and he hauled his first-cousin-once-removed off as if to execution. He

shabbiness, but to slovenliness I will show no mercy."

"That jars somehow. It sounds as if you have treated the dear old boy unkindly."

"Not unkindly, George, but firmly. There are times when one is called upon to exercise firmness. I have denied him a seat on the platform. I hope that this silent mark of my displeasure will be sufficient, and that in future he will use his clothes-brush before appearing in public."

"Well, I am relieved to learn that you didn't say anything to him. As for the



punishment, ten to one Harold will never be conscious of it."

But here he was wrong; for while the opening hymn was being sung, Mr. Mount simply bounced into the cloakroom.

"Boy, give me my hat at once!" he shouted.

"I will brush it first, sir."

"What! What! Are you also to insult me?"

"It is not insulting," I stammered, beginning to cry, as my shameful habit is when wronged or excited. "We were told to give all the hats a brush before returning them."

"There, there, my lad, I apologise. Don't cry. I tell you I apologise." And he was out of the building before I could get out my pocket handkerchief.

The following evening my chum came to me straight from the office with must-be-told-at-once news that wouldn't allow him to go home first to his tea.

I may explain that Edward is in the Law, "in a somewhat humble capacity," to quote our senior curate, who got him the situation. Not that Edward is a bit humble about it; rather, indeed, the reverse, for if, as some say, he is an office-boy, he doesn't suspect it. If he were to die, engraven upon his heart would be found the words "junior clerk."

"Victory!" he cried. "I see my way to blessing Mr. Easthorpe."

"How? Oh, do tell me!"

"Through his first-cousin-once-removed. Mr. Mount, who, it seems, is an old client of ours, came to the office this morning. About once a year, the clerks say, he alters his will. He has only four relatives, apart from his sister, and he always leaves everything to them, but in varying proportions as one or other of them is for the moment in his bad books."

"He can't have very much to leave anyone," said I.

"That is where you are jolly well wrong. He has twenty thousand pounds, and so has Zenobia, which is why he never leaves anything to her. They have always had this, but it has amused them to let the family believe they live on Harold's salary as secretary of a local cottage hospital, which, as a matter of fact, he always hands back as a subscription."

"Then they must have more than twenty thousand pounds each now, for they never spend anything."

"No, for they make it a rule not to

accumulate. What they don't spend they give away, and they have grown so fond of giving that they grudge themselves all other luxuries; but the clerks say that Harold's shabbiness is not a question of money, but of his taking no interest in himself."

"But, Edward, how does this help you?"

"Can't you see, Charlie, that his coming in to change his will, after taking such offence with Mr. Easthorpe yesterday, showed that he was going to disinherit him?"

"He may have come about something else."

"No, he made a new will, all right, or, rather, a codicil to the old, which we in the Law know has the same effect, for two of the articulated clerks were called in to witness the signature. And here my luck held. The boss told me to go with Mr. Mount to Euston to carry his bag. Directly we got outside I begged him to forgive the Rector, who had kept him off the platform, not out of contempt or ill-will, but as a punishment for not having brushed his coat, adding the old schoolmaster wheeze that it hurt the punisher most."

"So Fred takes upon himself to punish me, the head of the family? I will never forgive him," said Mr. Mount.

"You must," said I. "It'll come quite easy when you have learned to like him."

"How can I like such a pompous donkey?" he replied.

"And then I told him how I had come to like the Rector. He became so much interested that he took me into a tea-shop, where he could hear the whole story of his cousin's games with Scarlet in detail. The long and the short of it is that he is coming to your house on Saturday afternoon to be taken in to overhear the games himself."

On the following Saturday Edward arrived with Mr. Mount long before the time appointed. The old gentleman was bursting with impatience and anxiety lest his once-removed cousin should keep away, and kept sending one or other of us out to look down the road for him. And then he must put his own head out, which nearly ruined our whole plot, for Mr. Easthorpe at the moment was right upon us. However, his eyes were on a fine bunch of his famous roses he was carrying.

"What's that for?" whispered Mr. Mount, who had drawn in his head and was peeping from behind a window curtain.

We told him that the roses were for Mrs. Scarlet to take to her sister, and that there had been quite as large a bunch last Saturday.

"Well, I'm blessed!"



Mrs. Scarlet, who must have been waiting in the passage with her bonnet on, threw open the door before her visitor knocked, and, snatching the roses from him, started off at a run, not that he was late, but that she was of the sort who, given good time to catch a train, kill themselves to get the one before. Mother, who was standing with us, thought it very remiss to let a visitor of such great importance find his own way to the bedroom; but old Mr. Harold said the Rector was of no importance to Mrs. Scarlet compared with her incurable sister, and that he himself liked her for showing this so plainly, and it was possible Mr. Easthorpe did also.

"Yesterday I should have said not, but now I am less sure. But come, boys, it's time we made a start."

We pointed out the great danger of our being overheard if we arrived on the Scarlets' staircase before the two men had become absorbed in their game. We managed to hold him back for ten minutes, but for the last five he was protesting that too much margin was being allowed, and, indeed, we might have started a little earlier if we had known how very, very slowly he travelled upon all fours. And when he had crossed the two attics it was some time before he could get up, owing, he said, "to plumbago induced by the unwonted mode of progression." Indeed, he couldn't have got up at all without our help. Aren't old people funny? Each of us got under one of his shoulders, and we carried him down the three stairs to the corner commanding the view. His face was twisted with pain, poor old fellow, but he forgot his plumbago when the Rector, after making a noise like a fog-horn, clearing his throat, began to read the first "consequence."

"Ahem! Ahem! 'The far-sighted Rector of West Lawton——'"

The invalid thumped the quilt in fury. "It isn't a bit sporting! You knew your own name was coming, and purposely spoilt all the fun by writing one of your vote-of-thanks-to-the-chairman adjectives, instead of something saucy. That has been your artful way all along. You've no yewmur; that's what's wrong with you—no yewmur. We'll play different in future—write adjective and gent's name at the start, before folding the paper."

"No, Mr. Scarlet, no! I will go to considerable lengths to amuse the sick, but even for them I will not violate the most fundamental rule of a game that has been played since the days of the shepherd kings

of Egypt. Perhaps you are not aware that mural carvings in low relief at Philæ show a game in progress that is unmistakably our 'Consequences'?"

"Well, it's no fun as it is, with you spoiling all my best ideas."

"Quite so, quite so. I confess that the fun is wearing a little thin, even for me. I propose instead that we play that grand old English pastime 'Birds, Beasts, and Fishes,' with one-syllabled names only, to eliminate the need of paper and pencils. I have a capital one for you—a beast, D cross G."

"Dog!" shouted Scarlet. "Score, one love. Now guess this: a beast—G cross cross E."

"Ah, a teaser indeed! I give it up."

"Goat. Don't you see? G-o-t-e."

Mr. Easthorpe let the mis-spelling pass.

"Here is a fish, Mr. Scarlet—S cross cross E. What! You give it up? Sole. Score, one to two."

"No, you don't. You've spelt it wrong; the fish is s-o-a-l. I had that thrashed into me at school. It was a point our headmaster was most particular about. S-o-u-l meaning single, only; s-o-a-l, spirit; an edible fish."

"We will hold that over as a disputed point of orthography, leaving the score two love in your favour. I will give you another fish instead."

"Well, hurry up, can't you?" cried Scarlet impatiently. "Your wits seem to have gone wool-gathering all of a sudden." And then, in alarm at something he read in his visitor's face, he screamed: "Why, what is wrong?"

But the Rector, instead of answering him, leapt round and threw open the door. We were just able to fall back behind the turn of the staircase.

"Let the men who are there show themselves!" he shouted, and there wasn't a tremble in his great voice.

"All right, Fred, it is only your cousin," said Mr. Mount, coming forward.

"There were others with you."

Edward and I came out sheepishly.

"Edward West and Charlie Briggs, how come you to be making an unlawful entry into this house?"

"If Charlie Briggs is there, it is all right!" cried Scarlet from his bed. "I had a way cut through my attic wall for his and his mother's visits. Thanks, Charlie, for looking in. Tell your mother I am in good hands; Mr. Easthorpe is with me."

"You see, Fred, we are not criminals," said Mr. Mount. "I wanted to see you,

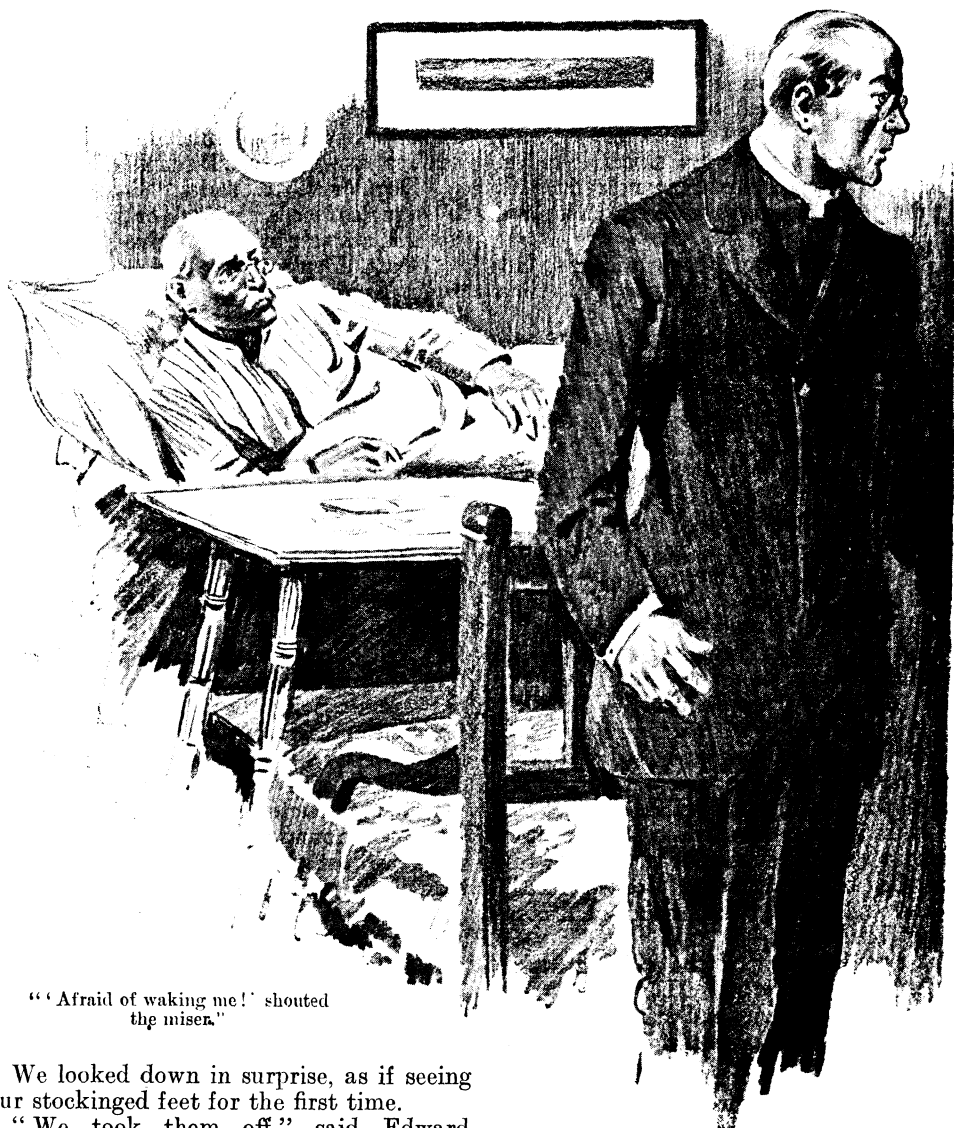


and was told you were in here. Charlie Briggs, whom I have got to know, brought me round to Mr. Scarlet's room by his private way."

"But why are you all without your boots?"

"Knowing that the Rector was talking to you."

"Complimentary to me, I must say! Confound your solemn face, Harold! I never know when you are pulling my leg. It is a foolish trick, but welcome now as



"'Afraid of waking me!' shouted the miser."

We looked down in surprise, as if seeing our stocking feet for the first time.

"We took them off," said Edward brilliantly.

"Yes, but why?"

We looked inquiringly from one to another. Why had we removed our boots?

"Are you all mad or dumb?"

"We were afraid of waking Mr. Scarlet," said old Mr. Harold, with a twinkle.

"Afraid of waking me!" shouted the miser.

indicating that what has brought you across London this hot afternoon is not grievous. I was afraid you were going to tell me that Zenobia's cold, that kept her from the opening, had developed into something more serious."

"Not at all. She is out and about again. What I have come for is this—to apologise to you for not staying to your ceremony



last Tuesday. The fact is that I had barely taken the very comfortable seat you gave me, when I made the alarming discovery that I had come away from home without brushing my coat. It occurred

No, twenty times. Well, good-bye. I must toddle back to Zenobia."

The Rector returned to his "Birds, Beasts, and Fishes," and we went back by the route we had come, but we did not cross the attic on all fours, nor had Edward and I to do any more carrying of Mr. Mount, the plumbago, apparently, having been laughed away. But when we got back into our sitting-room he sank down into an armchair, and he said that the cup of tea my mother brought him saved his life. Wasn't it fortunate she thought of it?

"I do hope, sir, you overheard them playing 'I Love my Love with an A,'" said mother, when the life-saving tea had done its work. "I can't imagine any occupation more absurd for two grown men."

"'Consequences,' Mother. Isn't it, sir, the limit for two?"

"No, my lad, the limit is 'Consequences' for one."

"Could it be played by one, sir?"

"Let us see. Can you give me a slip of paper? The back of that envelope will do. Thank you."

Mr. Mount produced a gold pencil-case from his waistcoat pocket, turned up the lead, and wrote rapidly.

"Are we to be allowed

to hear it?" asked my mother.

"Yes, indeed; I should be greatly disappointed if it were denied a hearing. I am ready now, if you are. But before reading I should explain that I have taken a liberty with the rules, and introduced a boy in the place of the lady. 'The irascible Harold Mount,'" he began, "'met the more Christian Edward West at Shanley's.



"'We were afraid of waking Mr. Scarlet,' said old Mr. Harold, with a twinkle."

to me afterwards that you might think I had taken offence at some imagined slight."

"Oh, dear, no! By the way, I hope I didn't frighten you just now, speaking so roughly."

"Well, you did, just a bit. What a fellow you are, Fred, when roused! You are twice the man I thought you. Twice?



He said to the boy: "I cannot forgive my cousin." The boy said to him: "Put yourself in my hands, and I will enable you to." He gave the boy *carte blanche*, and the boy gave him a real affection for his cousin. The consequence was he reinstated Mr. Easthope in his will, and the world said "Love follows laughter." "

"I suppose it does," said my mother

musingly. "If it had been me, I should have written, 'Tis love that makes the world go round.' What do you say, Edward?"

But Edward wasn't concerned about what the world said. He was sitting open-mouthed, stunned by the tremendous "Consequence" that had followed his attempt to bless his old enemy, the Rector of St. Jude's.



## THE HOUSE.

**O** LITTLE house! You make no claim  
To add to any builder's fame,  
For little glory you reflect  
Upon your old-time architect,  
Reared up of common stone and clay  
In a most ordinary way.

And yet men pause beside your door,  
Treading with reverence your floor;  
With bent uncovered heads they stand  
Like pilgrims in some holy land;  
Gazing, each silent and aloof,  
On uncouth beam and slanting roof.

To strangers coming from afar,  
Awed by the simple thing you are,  
Your chimney place and hearthstone rude  
Are objects of solicitude;  
Princes who live in marble halls  
Are mute before your lime-washed walls.

With scrupulous and anxious care  
Your time-worn breaches men repair,  
For, little house of brick and loam,  
Once on a time, you were the home  
Of one who coned with patient look  
Life's well-thumbed dog-eared lesson book;  
Who spent his days in careful toil  
And burned with joy the midnight oil;  
Who kept well tuned his passionate lyre  
And fanned to flame the sacred fire,  
Till in his nation's hour of need  
He rose and proved her great indeed.

FAY INCHFAWN,

*Author of "Songs of the Ups and Downs," "Through the Windows of a Little House," etc.*





"The wily little urchin grasped the egg between his fore-paws and, biting a hole in the top, began to lick out the contents with his tongue, tilting the egg as he proceeded."

WARWICK  
REYNOLDS

# THE HEDGEHOG

A CREATURE OF STRANGE CHARACTER  
AND UNCANNY POWERS

By H. W. SHEPHEARD - WALWYN

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

WE found him one summer evening sitting in the road, wondering where Mother was, and we named him Peter. He looked very little larger than an orange when he had hastily rolled himself up at a touch from my walking-stick—in fact, it was evident in every way that Mother had not possessed him very long. A newly-born hedgehog is a grotesque and gruesome object. Like a kitten, he is ushered into the world blind, but, unlike anything else on earth, his ears are closed

also. During the first few days of his life the spines are represented by soft, white quills, which lie flat upon the transparent pink skin, and altogether he would remind one more of a newly-hatched bird of some kind than anything which could by the wildest stretch of the imagination be construed as a hedgehog. Needless to say that the youngsters are not permitted at this stage to quit the compact and waterproof nest in which they are born.

Peter, however, had reached an estate



at which, in every point but size, he was an exact replica of Mother. Perhaps one should include sense among the exceptions, for he would otherwise have known better than to wander about an open road in broad daylight. The adults never come out to forage until after dusk. "What a lamb!" exclaimed my companion, when the black beady eyes and long pointed nose were presently directed inquisitively in our direction, and, indeed, he did look such a lamb that I was constrained to pick him up and bring him home, where he sat upon the dining-room table surrounded by the admiring family, and for the time being forgot Mother in the unaccustomed delight of a saucer of bread-and-milk. This disposed of, it had just occurred to him that he might as well set off to explore such a land of milk and honey—no doubt, the honey would come as a second course—when a sudden spasm of shyness caused him to curl up into a ball again with a jerk.

Someone was suggesting a game of table-croquet with him, when the proceedings were cut short with startling abruptness by a chorus of shrieks, and an instant later the family were bolting for the door as though that apparently innocent brown ball upon the table had just been dropped through the roof from an enemy aeroplane. My glance flew to Peter, whose inquisitive little nose was once more in evidence as he started off upon a tour of discovery. It was not upon Peter's plump, round form, however, that for a moment my horror-struck eyes remained riveted. I have sojourned in many seaside lodging-houses at the height of the season, and yet I make bold to declare that never in my life have I come across such a numerous household retinue as that which Peter had brought with him, and which were now employed in taking vigorous exercise about the table. So Peter was banished with almost hysterical haste to a distant part of the garden; and I certainly think it was rather mean to leave me alone to collect his lodgers.

Late that night I was brought hurriedly to the window by the sound of piteous screams. Visions of tortured animals or lost babies sent me flying out to investigate, and I reached the outer air in time to see Peter careering down the drive as though a legion of goblins were in pursuit. Every yard or two of his progress was punctuated by the most blood-curdling shrieks that I have ever heard from any living quadruped.

Upon hearing my voice he turned and came straight for me. Perhaps he associated me with Mother, or possibly with the milk, and still hoped for the honey.

They say that he who hesitates is lost, but I remembered the lodgers, and this time the young rascal was rolled into a basket and taken back to the spot where he had been found. For myself it was an experience worth having, for never otherwise would I have believed that so comparatively small a creature could give utterance to such piercing yells.

This characteristic might make one somewhat chary of introducing hedgehogs for the purpose of coping with the domestic cockroaches, although there is undoubtedly no more efficacious means of getting rid of this universal pest. I knew of one who lived in the same house for years—no doubt the bills for insect powder made serious inroads upon the family exchequer. He was christened Rosie on account of his thorns, and such was the reputation that he earned as a beetle-slayer that ere long it became quite the fashion in the place to hire him out by the week to work the oracle for similarly afflicted households. On one occasion, however, the messenger who came for him was doomed to disappointment, for when the cook went to fetch Rosie, she found that he was not in his usual sleeping-place, and it was not until later in the day that he was discovered in a sanctuary from which all the king's horses and all the king's men would not have availed to extract his prickly form. The harder one tries to unroll a hedgehog, the more obstinately will he keep himself rolled up with the aid of an enormously developed muscle, like a steel spring, that runs down the centre of his back. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to pour out the contents of a kettle in the ordinary way, so there was no alternative but to wait until the stubborn little Rosie chose to uncurl and emerge of his own sweet will.

Judging from "the cut of his jib," one would suppose that Nature originally intended the hedgehog to confine himself more or less to an insect diet—beetles, worms, slugs, snails, spiders, that is to say, and other small game of that description. Everything points to Nature having had some idea of that sort in her mind when she made up the formula for the first hedgehog. If so, she undoubtedly reckoned without her host. I once had a brown hen



sitting on a clutch of eggs in a nest which she had arranged for herself between two tufts of grass in a corner of the paddock, and one morning, when she came off to feed, it was evident that one of the eggs had disappeared. Investigations disclosed the empty shell lying behind another clump of grass a few feet away. Naturally I suspected the hen, although previously her character had been without a blemish. Next morning the same thing occurred, and I was already beginning to tell the little mother what I thought of her, when my attention was suddenly arrested by something unusual about the appearance of the two empty shells—something, moreover, that entirely exonerated the patient brown hen. Both of those eggs had a single round hole, and the contents had been completely abstracted without further breakage. That is not the way with a hen when she has an egg for breakfast.

Accordingly I suspected rats, wired the nest securely round, and set a couple of cage-traps outside. What was my surprise next day to discover an indignant hedgehog prancing about in one of the traps, a smile of content on the face of the hen, and all her eggs intact! If the hen was satisfied, however, I could not share her feelings without an actual and visible demonstration, so I kept the supposed thief a prisoner until it seemed likely that the pangs of hunger would outweigh any feelings of shyness or remorse that might be troubling him, then placed a fresh egg within his reach, and withdrew to a spot where I could watch him without his knowledge. Some moments elapsed before he unrolled, but he certainly did not waste time after catching sight of the egg. Instead of breaking the shell and thereby running the risk of spilling half his dinner, the wily little urchin grasped the egg between his fore-paws and, biting a hole in the top, began to lick out the contents with his tongue, tilting the egg as he proceeded, until not a particle remained.

One might truly say that the spirit of gluttony has reached its high-water mark in the hedgehog—so much so, indeed, that were it not for indisputable proofs, few would be persuaded to credit him with some of the deeds which have been laid to his charge. Farmers and gamekeepers know him well, and ruthlessly slay every one they can lay hands on. His teeth may be small, but such is their power that he will crunch

up frogs, mice, birds, and occasionally even young rabbits, as readily as a child will a toast-crust. He will sneak up in the dark and steal the yard-dog's bone, splintering it with consummate ease. Even poultry-houses will sometimes come in for a share of attention from this enterprising glutton, and on one occasion no less than fifteen young turkeys were slaughtered in a single night, the culprit being actually caught red-handed with one of his victims. Pheasants, partridges, and even hares have been constrained to minister to his insatiable appetite, although the means by which he contrives to catch the Spirit of Mercury will ever remain a mystery. Legion, indeed, are the crimes placed to the account of the fox, the cat, or the weasel, which should by rights be laid upon the prickly shoulders of Master Hedgehog.

There is one point, however, in which this very voracity of his is apt to benefit rather than distress mankind—one very remarkable point, that is, for there are many other lesser ones. It so happens that the hedgehog cherishes a decided partiality for snakes, and he will kill and devour a viper as comfortably as the most harmless of grass snakes. And here we come to what may be regarded as the grand climax of this marvellous animal's capabilities. If there do exist such things as jealous husbands or discontented wives in the hedgehog community, let them for ever abandon any hope of invoking the aid of weed-killer in lieu of divorce court proceedings, for whereas it might be going a little too far to declare that to a hedgehog poison is as the very air he breathes, there is no doubt that, without turning a hair—spine, rather—he can imbibe enough arsenic to kill twenty horses, while a spoonful of prussic acid will "leave him cold" in a very different sense from what it would mean in the case of you or me. Small wonder, then, that the miserable viper finds himself somewhat severely handicapped.

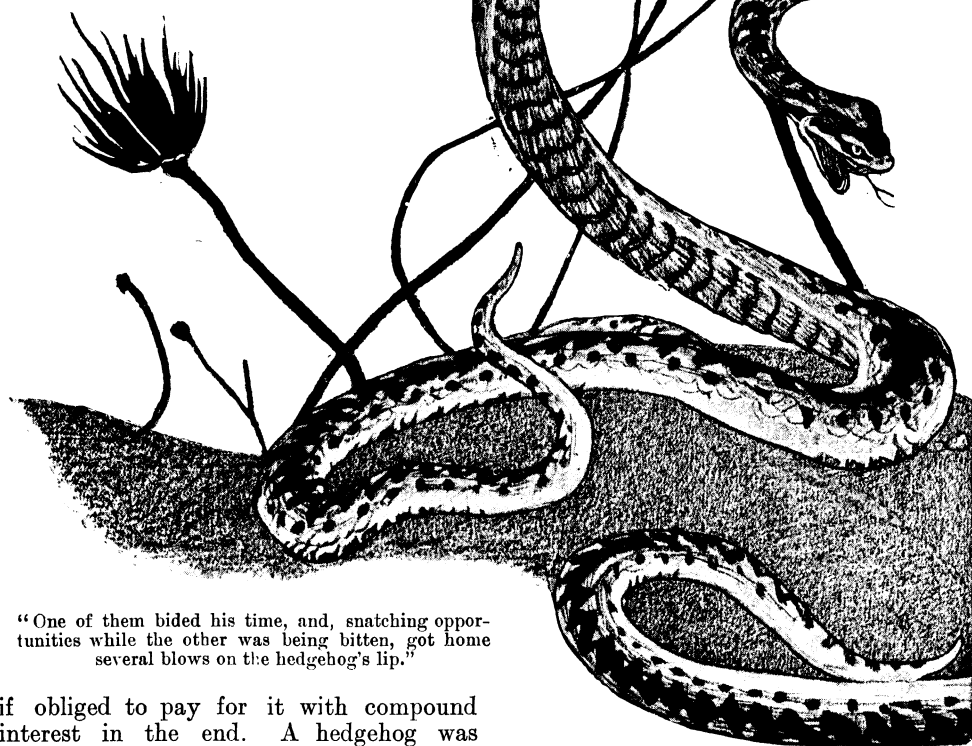
This characteristic of the hedgehog is one that singles him out at once from the entire animal kingdom. There is another notorious snake-killer, the mongoose, but the success of this agile little creature depends solely upon his skill in preventing the snake from putting in a shot on his own account, otherwise it would unquestionably mean a short cut to the next world for the mongoose. With the hedgehog, however, it is quite another story. No doubt he tries to avoid being bitten, but only in a sort



of incidental fashion, much as you or I might avoid stepping in a puddle. His method of fighting is interesting to watch, but can hardly be described as sportsman-like. It is usually the hedgehog who draws first blood with a crushing bite in the back. Like a flash, the snake strikes in return, but only to find his poor nose impaled upon an impenetrable *chevaux de frise* of sharp spikes. Partly from surprise and pain, and partly to gather impetus for another lunge, the reptile draws back his head again, and like lightning his opponent has uncoiled and got in another of those shattering bites. It seldom takes more than three to put any self-respecting snake out of action altogether, and then, with an unholy glitter in his greedy little eyes, Master Hedgehog advances and, beginning at the tail, deliberately eats his victim.

Once in a way, perhaps, the snake does get a little of his own back, even

licking his wound with exquisite non-chalance. "My dear fellow, I positively enjoy it." Neither of the snakes returned home that night, and no doubt there was a smile of repletion on the



"One of them bided his time, and, snatching opportunities while the other was being bitten, got home several blows on the hedgehog's lip."

if obliged to pay for it with compound interest in the end. A hedgehog was observed to attack a fine brace of vipers which had been coiled up together asleep on an ant-hillock. One of them bided his time, and, snatching opportunities while the other was being bitten, got home several blows on the hedgehog's lip. "Poison, did you say?" quoth the latter,

face of the hedgehog as he waddled back to his family. From which it would appear that, whether taken internally or mixed with the blood by injection, the most virulent poisons cannot exercise the slightest effect upon this uncanny creature.



In spite, however, of his armour-clad body and unsportsmanlike spirit, occasions will sometimes crop up when it becomes a case of the biter bit. One might have supposed that, with such an outfit, Man would be the only enemy that the hedgehog has to fear. And Man certainly is a foe to be reckoned with, though not always on account of the firmly-established reputation as a poacher which follows this little beast wherever he goes. In gipsy encampments, for instance, "baked urchin" is a dish that never fails to score a success, and it is not only the wandering rooster that finds himself the subject of unexpected popularity whenever a caravan has elected to pitch its tents in the neighbourhood. Strange though it may seem, in the case of an animal that is essentially carnivorous in his habits, the hedgehog makes very excellent eating when baked in his skin, the

There is another deadly enemy, however, who has been reported to employ his native wit to such good purpose that Master Hedgehog frequently finds himself outwitted altogether. That very prince of craft, the fox, appreciates a *bonne bouche* as much as the gipsies, but he is not the sort of fellow to run the risk of pricking his sensitive nose in order to obtain it. The story goes that when he finds a hedgehog he proceeds to roll the prize along with his paw in the direction of some suitable ditch or puddle of water, and forthwith topples him in. Now, the hedgehog is a beast that loathes water above all things, so he hastens to scramble out, incidentally exposing his limbs and underside, which are entirely undefended by prickles, and a single bite from watchful Reynard suffices to put his rolling-up apparatus out of action for good and all. I cannot personally vouch for the



"A hedgehog was observed to attack a fine brace of vipers which had been coiled up together asleep on an ant-hillock."

taste being compared to something between chicken and very tender veal.

The dog is seldom a foe that requires to be treated very seriously; indeed, he seldom gets much further than capering round and round, the hedgehog alternately pricking his nose and barking like an idiot.

truth of this report, but it seems too good a story to be passed over.

We must not leave the hedgehog without mentioning some of the uses to which his very extraordinary skin has been put from time to time. The ancient Romans, who undoubtedly knew a good thing when



they saw it, found it extremely useful in the manufacture of cloth. Even nowadays it is not an uncommon practice for a farmer to tie a skin round the muzzle of a calf that he wishes to wean, and the efficacy of such a device is obvious. Carriage horses also—in the days before they came to be regarded as curiosities—used frequently to be cured of the habit of “boring” by a hedgehog skin fixed to the pole, and one can well understand that such an unpleasant reminder would very soon have the desired effect. Obviously it was for his own benefit, however, that the hedgehog’s skin was primarily intended by Nature, and in addition to the protection that this coat of mail affords during his winter sleep, not to mention the highly unfair advantage in dealing with his neighbours, there are other walks of life—in more senses than one—in which it comes in useful in a manner which is as interesting as it is unique.

In the course of a moonlight walk, circumstances will often arise in which the hedgehog suddenly finds himself on the wrong side of a wall or some barrier of a natural description. Having climbed laboriously to the top, there still remains the problem of descent on the other side to be dealt with. The hedgehog being naturally a short-sighted animal, and the light comparatively bad at night, it necessarily follows that he has no means of gauging the depth of the abyss confronting him. Be it six inches, however, or as many feet, not one iota does it matter to him. All he has to do is to take a blind healer into space, automatically rolling himself up in mid-air, and such is the elastic quality of his natural overcoat that he will arrive on *terra firma* as comfortably as an india-rubber ball. Hedgehogs have even been seen to dive thus from walls fourteen feet in height, and on reaching the ground uncurl and trot off with supreme unconcern.

There is one supposed offence of the hedgehog’s that is worth alluding to, if only to show to what lengths the rustic imagination can reach in the case of a dog that has been given a bad name. A dairy farmer

once told me in perfectly good faith that he was in the habit of killing every hedgehog he could find because they sucked his cows when they were lying in the fields. When one thinks of the serried rows of needle-point teeth, however, that bristle in the hedgehog’s mouth, one would very much like to see the cow that would take that sort of thing lying down—in either sense of the words. And standing up the thief naturally could not get there. He may be an accomplished somersaulter, but I do not see him shining in a pole-climbing competition. For another thing, his mouth is far too small to be of any use for such a purpose. It is quite a prevalent delusion, notwithstanding, in rural circles, and no doubt the animal’s extraordinary fondness for milk lends colour to a rumour which may possibly have originated in the fact that hedgehogs have actually been detected sometimes in the act of lapping up the milk that often oozes from a cow’s udder at the approach of milking-time.

All things considered, the hedgehog should be regarded as more of an ally than a foe to the interest of both farmer and gamekeeper, whereas to the gardener he is a veritable godsend, this very spirit of gluttony naturally rendering him the more valuable as a destroyer of insects. Consider the storage capacity of that round, tub-like body in comparison with those of other insect-eating animals and birds, and one can understand that the number required to provide a single square meal for a hedgehog would be enough to keep a shrew-mouse or a robin for a week. Persuade one to make his home in your kitchen-garden, and you may look in vain for a slug or snail, but remember that you will also look in vain for a strawberry if he has a chance to get at it. Generally speaking, he is very fond of fruit, and will enjoy the time of his life in an orchard during the “wind-fall” season, although I do not think there is much truth in the rumour that he has been seen rolling on apples or pears in order to carry them away on his spines for more leisurely consumption at home. It would require our old friend Reynard to think of such a thing as that.





# MR. BRAND'S SECRETARY

By J. J. BELL

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY LLOYD

SOFTLY, discreetly, the little pewter-cased clock on the mantelpiece of the spacious private office struck four, and the managing director, at his big desk, checked its accuracy by his watch. The managing director was always checking small things, which may have accounted for his being in control of a great business.

The girl in the easy-chair by the hearth, noting the act, got up, drawing on a glove.

"You have an appointment, Uncle Robert. We can finish our chat another time."

"Sit still, Dorothy—you'll find some picture papers at your side. It's only Carter, my secretary—a few words on a personal matter—won't take a minute." Mr. Brand had a jerky way of speaking.

"But would not you and he prefer—"

"Not at all. I'm afraid he's going to ask for a week or two's leave. Couldn't have happened at a more awkward time. In a sense, since you're a shareholder, it is your affair." Mr. Brand pressed a button on his desk.

Ronald Carter, entering, bowed to Miss Brand—with whom he was acquainted to the extent of saying "Good morning" and offering a chair—and hesitated, his pale face flushing slightly. "Shall I come back later, Mr. Brand?"

"No, no. Sit down." The managing director threw one leg over the other and looked genial.

Ronald Carter sat down. He had the weary look that hints at constant, if not acute, physical suffering. He glanced again at the girl, whose fair face was now half hidden by the picture paper, and seemed to try to forget her presence.

"Well, Carter, I hope the great Sir John has given you a prescription that will soon put you to rights—eh?"

The young man's answering smile was rueful. "I'm afraid it's not quite so good as that, sir," he said. "Sir John believes he can make me as fit as ever, but it will take at least six months of—of idleness."

"Six months! Good gracious!" Mr. Brand's attitude of ease was gone; his geniality gave place to gravity. "Six months—extremely unfortunate—eh?"

"Yes, sir. And that is Sir John's minimum." The dark eyes in the tired, fine-featured countenance were very anxious.

Mr. Brand coughed. "Extremely unfortunate indeed, Carter—as you doubtless appreciate—considering that we are just about to start on our big scheme of re-organising the departments."

"Yes, Mr. Brand." Carter winced slightly. He had learned his fate from the little word "are." Had his chief used the word "were," he might have hoped.

"You could not manage to—er—carry on for a few months—eh?"

A rustle of paper—Miss Brand was turning a page rather clumsily.

"I put that point to Sir John," Carter replied, "and he simply refused to take my case unless I lay off at once. He also warned me—but I need not go into that."

"Well, I'm sorry, Carter—exceedingly sorry." Mr. Brand paused. "But you see how we are placed—eh?"

Carter was well used to the "eh?" but now it was getting on his nerves.

"I have things in pretty fair shape," he said, with a touch of that pride which forbade his waiting for a formal dismissal or its equivalent. "I dare say a couple of days would be enough to let me give my successor a general idea of his duties."

"Really, it's very distressing—most distressing." Mr. Brand coughed again. "Had it not been for this scheme of



reorganisation—which is, as you are aware, truly urgent——”

“I quite understand, sir,” said Carter, rising, “and with your permission—assuming you do not require the usual notice—I shall not come back after Saturday.”

Mr. Brand rose also. “I repeat, I’m sorry, Carter”—and he looked unhappy—“but since it must be, I can only wish you restoration to health sooner than—er—well, we can discuss it later—eh?”

Carter inclined his head, glanced once more in the direction of the girl, whose face was now hidden by the picture paper, and left the room.

Mr. Brand resumed his chair with a sigh. “Most unfortunate—extremely!” He turned abruptly.

His niece was on her feet, crumpling the paper to a shapeless mass. Suddenly she tossed it on the coals.

“Good Heavens, girl! Do you want

to set the chimney on fire? The sweep is overdue——”

“I don’t care if it sets the building on fire!” With flushed cheeks and shining eyes, she strode forward. “Uncle Robert, I’m ashamed of you!”

“You are a—*what*?”

“You deliberately allowed him to resign!”

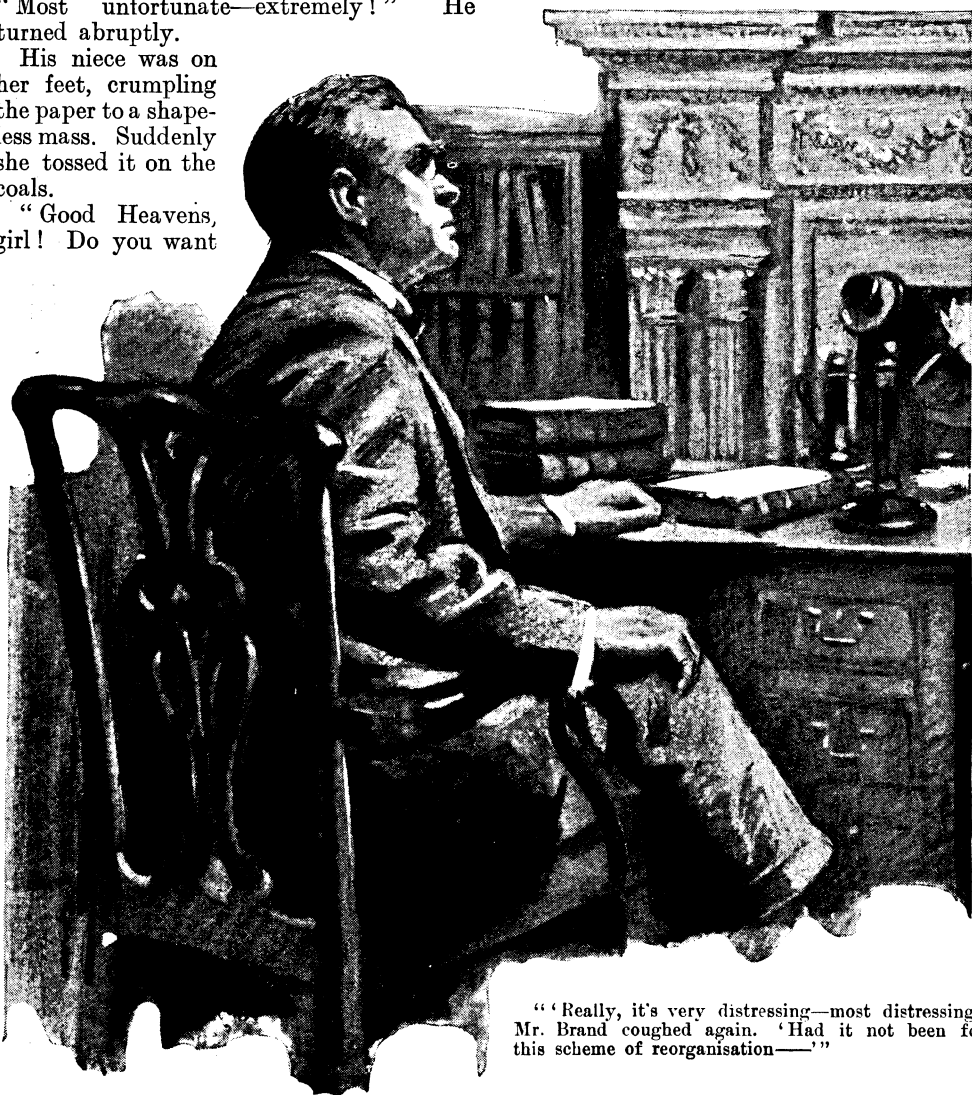
“Well? Would it have been kinder to have asked him to do so?”

“Why on earth didn’t you tell him you would keep his post open?”

“For six months?”

“For twelve, if need be!”

“My dear Dorothy,” said Mr. Brand,



“‘Really, it’s very distressing—most distressing.’ Mr. Brand coughed again. ‘Had it not been for this scheme of reorganisation——’”



restraining himself, "I gave you credit for more common-sense."

"And I you for more common humanity!"

"Tut, tut! No one could be sorrier than I that Carter has to go."

"Why has he to go?"

"Why?—because he's ill!"

"Why is he ill?"

seen the War, Mr. Carter, as you have often declared, has served you so well that he deserves the best treatment you could give him." She controlled herself. "I'm afraid

I was hasty, perhaps rude, Uncle Robert—"

"You were."

"But you must keep Mr. Carter's post open, and while he



"I quite understand, sir," said Carter, rising, 'and with your permission . . . I shall not come back after Saturday.'"

"Some legacy of that accursed War, which, of course, makes it all the more regrettable. Still—"

"Regrettable? Fiddlesticks! It—it's heartrending! But even if he had never

is off duty you must pay him at least half his salary."

"Must—must? I'll be confounded if I do any such thing, Miss Dorothy, and you can put that in your pipe and—"



Miss Dorothy smiled. "I'm afraid we are both inclined to lose our heads, Uncle Robert. I haven't brought my pipe with me, but I'll try one of your cigarettes." And she helped herself from the box on the desk. "Come," she resumed, laying down the match, "I want your promise that Mr. Carter's place shall be kept for him. In the name of justice——"

"Sentiment!" he snapped.

"Any name you like so long as you——"

"No. You're not a silly girl, Dorothy. You know something about the business from which you take your income——"

"I know that the business can afford a little generosity."

"Last year happened to be a good one. Now listen to me. Six months hence our methods and organisation will have been entirely altered. Carter, if he came back, would be hopelessly at sea."

"I don't believe it. He could soon pick up the——"

"Meanwhile I should have had all the trouble and worry of training another man to my new methods. What then? Would you expect me to sack him for Carter's benefit? Or—ha, ha!—pay him a pension for doing nothing? Confound it! Beg pardon, Dorothy, but I do wish you would leave me to run this business, even though you do happen to be the largest shareholder."

"I don't wish to have to use that or any other advantage I may have," said Dorothy, examining her cigarette, "but I'm going to insist——"

"Why, what is your interest in this young man—eh?" Mr. Brand fairly bristled.

"None, except that your horrid meanness will probably lessen his chances of getting better."

"Horrid meanness? I like that!"

"So it would appear, Uncle Robert. And your cigarettes are vile!" She tossed the offending thing into the fire. "Well, that's settled. Mr. Carter is coming back when he's better, and till then——"

Bang! Mr. Brand's fist smote the desk. He was red with anger. "Mr. Carter will leave on Saturday, with an extra month's salary—to which he is not really entitled—and his place shall be filled at once—and permanently! I'm managing director of this concern, miss."

"Then I must appeal to Sir Wilfred Patten and the other directors. In fact, I've a good mind to join the board myself."

He regarded her with amazed anger, which

was gradually submerged by a rising tide of doubt. For he knew that Sir Wilfred, the chairman of the company, wanted to marry Dorothy, and that the other directors were pretty much her good and faithful henchmen. But the tide ebbed and resentment prevailed.

"I'll resign before I take such an order from anybody!" he said. "Give me a woman for black ingratitude! When your poor father died—worth next to nothing—you, girl, though you seem to have forgotten it, were working for your living. I took charge and saved the business from extinction. I've made the business what it is to-day. I've made your shares, which weren't worth five hundred then, worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. I've lifted your income from two pounds a week to twenty-five thousand a year. And—and now, because you happen to take a silly fancy to an unlucky young man—a silly schoolgirl fancy——"

"Uncle Robert, how dare you!"

"Dare! You—why, you're scarlet! You dare to interfere with my methods and then threaten to put my co-directors, who have done nothing to make your fortune—you threaten, I say, to put them against me—me that have done all the work! Well, then, go and do it!" He bounced up, snatched the door open, and with a shaking finger pointed the way. "Go and do it!"

"I will!" said Dorothy in a choked voice and marched out.

To her chauffeur she gave the address of Sir Wilfred Patten, but half-way thither changed her mind and gave the order "Home." Her wrath had burned itself out; compunction was making itself felt. Yes, she had certainly been unkind as well as unfair to Uncle Robert. She ought never, even for the moment, to have forgotten what he had done for her. He had indeed made the fortune that was hers, with all the easy delights and luxury she enjoyed to-day. How different from four years ago, when she had been slaving to help her harassed father in a poky little office, both wondering desperately how the wages bill of the decrepit little factory was to be met at the end of the week! And then her father's death, her own loneliness, and the dreadful question "What next?" And lo! the appearance of Uncle Robert, whom she hardly knew, from the North, his frowns and head-shakings, his insatiable questioning, his indefatigable figurings with a stump of pencil on scraps of paper, and at last his



"Cheer up, my girl! Leave it to me, and I'll pull the old business together." To many observers Robert Brand had done the impossible. Had he been a little less hard-headed, Dorothy thought now, he must surely have failed. And yet she could not forgive his obstinacy in the matter of Mr. Carter. Well, she could be obstinate, too, and if she could not gain her end in one way she would try another. Meantime she must make her peace with Uncle Robert.

On arriving at the charming flat where she lived with an elderly cousin, she went first to the telephone.

"Yes, it's Dorothy," she said in reply to a query of astonishment. "I want to apologise. I'm sorry. Please forgive. I shan't refer to the thing again. Perhaps you were right—perhaps I was wrong. Let it go at that, Uncle Robert, and please—please let me come to see you to-morrow to—ask a favour for myself. Will you? Oh, thank you, you dear, forgiving man! I'll turn up at three, and please be quite alone."

Mr. Brand, in his few leisure moments next day, made many guesses at the probable nature of his niece's request, and was wrong every time. She arrived punctually, and without preface said:

"Uncle Robert, I'm getting tired of this idle life. I want work. I'm still sorry for poor Mr. Carter, but his misfortune is my opportunity. Make me your secretary in his place."

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Uncle Robert, and then burst out laughing. "Allow the ladies for changing their minds!"

Dorothy coloured, but kept her temper. "It's not so absurd as it may sound to you, Uncle Robert. I know a good deal about the business——"

"You did in your poor father's time," he interrupted kindly, "and I'll admit you were doing as well as a man could have done then. But to-day the business is another story—eh?"

"Thanks to you, Uncle Robert," she said sweetly. "But, you know, I've always taken an interest in its wonderful progress. I'm very far from ignorant of what is going on. I'm sure I could answer two questions out of every three you could ask."

"H'm!" muttered Mr. Brand, still smiling.

"And now that you are going to reorganise, don't you think I could acquire a knowledge of the new methods as smartly as anyone on the premises or elsewhere?"

Mr. Brand's countenance became serious. "Why, confound it—beg pardon, Dorothy—I do believe you could! But—but——"

"Never mind the 'buts.' Give me a trial."

"Yes, but suppose at the end of a week or so you decide to—well, for instance, get married—eh?"

"I shan't do that in—a week or so." She looked down for an instant, then faced him. "I had better tell you, Uncle Robert, that last night Sir Wilfred asked me, and I had to say 'No.'"

"Why, I fancied—well, I'm sure I don't know what to make of you."

"Make me your secretary."

Again Mr. Brand laughed. "Pretty smart, eh? But I'm sorry for Sir Wilfred. Sure you couldn't—well, never mind! I'll think it over."

"Settle it now. I'll start on Monday, and leave the salary to you."

"Upon my word!"

"And, by the way, you need not tell Mr. Carter. It might be awkward—for you."

"I dare say it would. Poor Carter, I'll miss him badly!"

"No need to be uncomplimentary! So that's settled! Come and dine to-night, and we can discuss the salary. I promise you I'll work for it."

"I'll be glad to dine to-night, but, my dear Dorothy, I can't promise——"

She was standing, holding out her hand. "Clinch the bargain, Uncle Robert."

"Well, I'm——" But somehow he could not refuse to shake.

On the Saturday, after a kindly enough farewell from the managing director, Ronald Carter left the office wherein he had once dreamed of something more than rising to fortune. He left, thanking God that there was no one depending on him—that his only sister had been comfortably married a few months earlier. A little later he went up the steps of the nursing home, not caring very much whether he ever came down again.

And on the Monday Dorothy took his place in the office. Mr. Brand did not spare her and, to his secret satisfaction, she proved equal to her task. At the end of a month she ventured the question—

"Am I earning my salary?"

"Just about it," he replied, adding, "By the way, there's no necessity for your staying in the office after I leave at five."

"I'm learning things."

"Don't overdo it."



When the third month had gone she ventured another question: "Am I doing as well as Mr. Carter did?"

"Not far from it. Still, Carter was a good man to have. I could trust him just as I trust you. He had the business at heart."

"He would be interested in the changes."

"I dare say. Wish he could see them, poor chap. Hope he's pulling through all right—always meant to inquire. Still, it might raise false hopes—eh?"

Dorothy poised her pencil for the next piece of dictation.

"You are still staying late in the office," her uncle remarked.

"Yes, there's still so much to learn," she answered, and, for no apparent reason, blushed.

It was in the middle of the seventh month that her work began to fall off—fall to pieces, as the puzzled Mr. Brand expressed it inwardly. He was badly worried about Dorothy. Nerves were a new development for her.

"My girl, you'll have to stop it," he said abruptly one afternoon.

"Oh, no, not yet—please, not yet!" she cried.

"At once! Why, you've got the jumps! You'll be fainting next. Don't come in to-morrow."

"I—I must."

"You must not. Don't worry about me. I'll manage somehow. You're due a holiday, in any case."

"But I *must* be here to-morrow morning, Uncle Robert."

"Why the deuce must you?"

"There's something I must explain."

"Explain it now."

"To-morrow morning—first thing. You'll understand it better then—at least, I hope you will."

She was white. He was regarding her anxiously when a clerk entered.

"Mr. Carter would like to see you, sir."

"Mr. Carter!"

The girl stifled an exclamation.

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, smiling, "and looking very fit and well."

"Ask him to come in."

"No, no!" whispered the girl faintly. As the door closed, she rose in a panic. "Let me go. I don't want to see him."

"Sit down, Dorothy," said Mr. Brand, firmly though not harshly. "There's something queer. I've got to get to the bottom of it."

"Oh, spare me, Uncle Robert! I've done nothing really wrong—only kept his post for him."

"His post! Come in! Brace yourself, girl. Remember your dignity," he muttered. "Come in, Carter!"

Ronald Carter came in—a new man. But he was not a little nervous as he said: "Pardon my coming to-day when I was not expected till the morning. But I've just got back to Town, and could not delay offering my thanks. Mr. Brand—and you, too, Miss Brand—I don't know what to say to you"—his voice shook—"to you, Mr. Brand, for keeping this place for me and for all your kind messages; to you, Miss Brand, for your immense kindness in sending me, nearly every day, those huge typescripts describing the business under the new methods, so that I come back quite familiar with them. Really, I think I got better mainly because of your goodness to me. I thank you both with all my heart," he finished, but his gaze was on the girl.

And so was Mr. Brand's, yet it was not so very accusing. But it was the familiar managing director who, with a dry smile, turned to the young man.

"Well, that's all right, Carter. Pleased to know that Miss Brand has understood and expressed my wishes—h'm!—so fully. I trusted a good deal to her—h'm!—discretion during your absence. She will explain things generally—won't you, Dorothy, eh? Glad to have you back, Carter. Excuse me for a moment."

He was up and gone before either could speak. In the privacy of another room: "The monkey!" he muttered. "But I got out of it pretty gracefully—eh? The trouble is that he's not in love with her."

But there Mr. Brand was wrong. Ronald had been in love with Dorothy for many a day, and love may be betrayed even in a "Good morning," or the handing of a chair. Dorothy knew it on the day of his resignation, just as she knows now that some day he will find the courage, even in the face of her wealth, to ask her to marry him.





## THE SPIDER'S WEB

**B**EHOLD the spider's webbing shake  
With finer wire than men can make,  
And he himself more nimbly poise  
Than ever you saw men or boys;  
Break it, a finer rigging's wreckt  
Than ever naval architect  
Could set in place, and prompter he  
To mend his ruin than are we.

Under the leaves in smothered light  
He draws his tiny circle tight;  
Crouched in a web of fairy steel  
He lies, the hub of his own wheel;  
Runs outward at each dim report,  
The sentinel of his own fort,  
Alert and happy to fulfil  
His steadfast and unwearied will.

Brief is that little life—as brief  
As is the tale of bud and leaf;  
Betwixt the green leaf and the ground  
He dwells a season, peril-bound;  
One moment taut, another slack  
And clinging to his dwelling's wrack;  
Rebuilding on the day destroyed  
His airy castle in the void.

WILFRID THORLEY.



# SALLY AND THE SQUARE PEG

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY BALLIOL SALMON

"THE subject," said Sally pensively, "interests me."

Quintin Bailey paused in the act of striking a match and surveyed her in some surprise. "Pig-farming?"

She could have withered him with scorn. Instead, she exclaimed in a gentle, reflective voice: "No. Mr. Cavanagh's incompatibility with his employment."

Quintin shook his head with a slight frown. He wasn't at all sure that he approved of Sally's interest in "subjects" such as Mr. Cavanagh. "You must tell me about it in words of less than seven syllables," he said. "Then I shall understand." He thought he knew his Sally Ludlow, who hated ridicule.

But she looked at him with great, serious blue-grey eyes and said: "You must have realised, talking to him as much as you have, that he's not cut out for that sort of life. I think, you know, that there's nothing so tragic as that."

"It might be tragic—for the pigs, I admit. But I don't think you need worry. Cavanagh understands the job—he's quite a bright lad, really."

Even that didn't provoke the scorn it should have. Quintin found Sally's mood of gentle seriousness new and disconcerting.

"Mr. Cavanagh isn't the sort of man to slack. He'd do his duty. But his heart's not in it."

"His capital is, though," said Quintin brutally. "Same as mine. And Middle Whites, my dear Sally, are a paying proposition."

"Money!" said Sally, and swept it into the realms of the despised. "I'm not talking of money. Francis Cavanagh doesn't make you think of money, does he? He makes you think of big things—Adventure and— and Achievement and——" She waved a slim hand to indicate further capital A's

inspired by Cavanagh, and Quintin looked at her grimly.

"You seem to know the deuce of a lot about my partner, Sally, and he's not a talkative blighter, either."

"His soul's cramped," said Sally gravely.

"What?"

"I said his soul was cramped. I think it's a tragedy. A man like that, destined for something big, keeping pigs in Cumberley Magna!"

"Why?"—Quintin took his pipe out of his mouth and stared at her blankly—"why, I thought you were rather keen on the scheme. You've always been interested. And as to achievement, there's no reason why we shouldn't make a jolly good thing out of it. We've started well, and in a few years——"

"A few years! The best years of his life! Devoted to pig-farming! He might have made a stir in the world."

"He's not a Bolshevik or a designer of ladies' hats."

"He's a personality," said Sally, with dignity. "I suppose you'll admit that?"

"I'll admit he's a thorough good sort. As to personality, it doesn't interfere with pig-farming, does it? Cavanagh's practical enough. He's just been explaining a new scheme he's got for fencing the grass pens."

Sally rose. "It's no good talking to you. If you can't understand the tragedy of the square peg in the round hole——"

Quintin laughed unkindly. "Never mind, Sally. P'raps you'll be able to make him fit."

To which Sally replied gravely that that was impossible—fortunately, one could not make big characters small.

"But why," said Quintin, in tones of plaintive bewilderment, "should it be necessary to—er—reduce one's character in order to run a pig-farm? Surely——"



But Sally was already retreating down the wide walk between the apple trees and wall-flowers. The scent of the wallflowers soothed her ruffled sensibilities. Down here in the sunny garden they were always out by late February, and they did not remind her of—pigs. You could just see the pigs' domain from the end of the wide walk, for the fringe of trees on the hillside was leafless yet, but there was no occasion to go to the end of the wide walk just then at all.

Nevertheless, Sally went, sniffing delicately a glorific sprig of velvet-brown wall-flower, and reflecting that Quintin Bailey was a thoroughly unobservant young man. *She* had known from the very first that Francis Cavanagh's destiny was not a pig-farm, had felt from the moment of his institution as Quintin's partner that the welfare of Middle Whites did not represent Life to him.

She did not see him ordering the comfort of grass pig-pens at all. She saw him disguised as an Arab—he was a tall, lean young man with a grave tanned face—engaged on some wonderful Secret Service mission in the desert, or else, muffled in the garb of Arctic exploration, leading a great expedition in the hazardous Polar wastes, grim-faced and keen-eyed.

"Anything I can do," Sally said decidedly, "will be my duty." Sally had never talked of her duty before.

She reached the little gate at the end of the wide walk, opened it, and went through. There was no path the other side, only a cart-track across the rough tussocky grass of the hillside to the fringe of bare beech trees. Sally, disregarding the welfare of a pair of trim grey suède slippers, tramped across it.

The rain-wet leaf carpet beneath the beeches made noiseless going. Francis Cavanagh, standing at the other side of the wood, didn't hear her approach.

Brown-gaitered, in well-worn tweeds and biting the stem of a villainously black pipe, he was staring out across the domain of the Middle Whites with eyes which Sally felt sympathetically sure saw a longer horizon than that of the wooded slope above the pig-pens.

It was a tragedy—the square peg in the round hole—however much Quintin Bailey might laugh. Sally trod on a twig that snapped. The Square Peg spoke without looking round.

"I was just reckoning—or trying to—how much wire an' wood it'd take," he

said. Then, as Sally did not answer: "Oh, I thought it was Quintin, Miss Ludlow. I—"

Sally smiled, a gentle, sympathetic smile, intended to convey to Mr. Cavanagh how completely she understood. It was so nice of him, she thought, to try to hide his distaste for his surroundings from Quintin.

The Square Peg removed his pipe and looked gravely at the slim figure in the grey-blue jumper and grey-and-mauve striped skirt. There were just those tints in the February twilight sky above the hill, and in Sally's eyes, and the bronze of the beech buds matched her hair. It is possible to be a pig-farmer and yet observe these things.

"Quintin's on the verandah," said Sally. "And please fill your pipe again." Smoking, she thought, might be solace to a Square Peg, even a beastly-looking pipe like that.

As he crammed in the tobacco, she noticed his brown hands, long and fine. They were not the hands of a pig-farmer. Pig farmers ought to have hands like Quintin Bailey's, stumpy-fingered and broad.

"If only you had sensible shoes on," said Francis Cavanagh's voice, "you could have had a look round the new pens."

For the second time Sally's eyes, wide and lovely, approved Mr. Cavanagh's heroic endeavour to fit the round hole. "Oh," she said quickly, "it's not the shoes—I mean if I'd got on boots a foot thick, I shouldn't want to go and see the pig-pens."

Mr. Cavanagh looked at her oddly and said nothing. It was the first time Sally Ludlow had evinced any particular antipathy to Middle Whites; hitherto she had been quite intelligently interested in the venture into which he and young Quintin Bailey had launched some eighteen months after the end of the War, and she had many times inspected the pigs' domains with one or both of their owners.

Quintin had visited at the little old white house, in its sunny garden of apple-trees and wallflowers, since his boyhood, and it had been partly at the Ludlows' suggestion that he had bought the cottage on the hillside, with its surrounding acres of woodland and grass, when he left the Army for pig-farming. Six months later Francis Cavanagh, who had fought with him in the trenches, joined forces with him in the culture of Middle Whites, thereby providing the aforesaid subject of interest to Miss Sally Ludlow which had culminated in her determination to save him from his fate.



She decided that it would require tact. The Square Peg was obstinately reticent on the fit of his round hole—too loyal to Quintin to grouse, even to a sympathetic spirit with blue-grey eyes. He said at last, after a long pause—

"I can't imagine you in boots a foot thick, you know."

Sally made a little impatient gesture. "Mr. Cavanagh!"

"Yes?"

"I—I want to talk to you on a—a subject of great

importance. You and Quintin will come in to-morrow evening?"

"Thank you."

It had become a recognised thing that the two should spend three evenings in the week with the Ludlows, only Cavanagh still



"The rain-wet leaf carpet . . . made noiseless going. Francis Cavanagh . . . didn't hear her approach."

accepted the invitation with punctilious politeness.

"Mrs. Vernon is coming. She'll be the fourth for mother and dad and Quintin, so I can talk to you," said Sally ingenuously.

He gave her a long, grave look. Then suddenly he smiled. "Thank you again, Miss Sally."



Sally, returning to the house, met Quintin leaving it by the wide walk. He greeted her with a cheery grin, but he made no allusion to their conversation on the verandah, or to the somewhat vagabond appearance of a pair of grey suède slippers.

enthusiasm. The Square Peg, facing her in the firelight, adroitly distant, in the long, low-ceilinged room, from the bridge players, was grave. He heard Sally's voice informing him joyously of a heaven-sent opportunity—opportunity of escape from the bondage of



"Biting the stem of a villainously black pipe, he was staring out across the domain of the Middle Whites."

For two days Sally was a damsel of much thought and a considerable air of elation. On Thursday evening she was a vision of dainty charm and triumphant

Middle Whites, an expedition that should bring him fame.

"Colonel Patterson is in command. I've known him since I was six. I—I wrote to him.

They're short of a man—someone who was going has broken his leg—and he said that



if you were keen—— You see, I told him all about you, and he's interested, and—and so am I."

An odd look crossed Cavanagh's face, but this time he omitted to say "Thank you."

not a question of Quintin's understanding," he said rather curtly. "Quintin's one of the best."

"I know." Sally spoke in a little, gentle,



"He heard Sally's voice informing him joyously of a heaven-sent opportunity. . . . an expedition that should bring him fame."

Sally went on, unheeding. "Isn't it a glorious opportunity? They start in a fortnight, so Colonel Patterson wants you to arrange an interview to-morrow. You can, can't you?"

"But"—the Square Peg stared blankly at her small vivid face, then he gave a curt, awkward laugh—"there's my job here. I'd have to throw that up."

"Oh," said Sally quickly, "I'll make Quintin understand! He'll realise that you simply couldn't let a chance like this go because of—pigs!" And the scorn of the last word was almost tangible.

Cavanagh's tanned face reddened. "It's

serious voice, but her eyes were alight with purpose and enthusiasm. She leaned forward in her high-back chair by the fire; perhaps she knew that the little red chiffon frock was the most effective she had ever



possessed ; perhaps she wore it that evening with the consciousness of creating an "atmosphere" that would subtly emphasise the folly of a life devoted to Middle Whites. At all events, she might have scored triumph as the Square Peg's grave eyes rested on the picture of her, although she did not altogether understand their expression.

"You," he said, very

She answered him without any hesitation at all. "Oh, yes ! Yes !" Somehow she



slowly and deliberately. "you — would think I should go ?"

"Colonel Patterson is in command . . . I—I wrote to him . . . and he said that if you were keen——"



liked him for not saying "You would advise me to go."

He said: "I'll look up Colonel Patterson to-morrow."

From which it would appear that the little red chiffon frock had done its work. Sally's smile was radiant. "It's the sort of expedition with tremendous opportunities for—for the individual," she said. It is to be presumed that Colonel Patterson had said that.

"I——" said the Square Peg, and stopped short. For the second time he gave her rather an odd look, but he left his sentence unsaid. After all, he *was* an individual, and he was going.

She found the task of placating Quintin rather surprisingly simpler than she had imagined. Quintin laughed, told her that she was romantic and ridiculous, and announced his intention of carrying on single-handed during Cavanagh's absence.

"Oh!" said Sally doubtfully "But it isn't likely that he'll want to come back to—pig-farming, so it doesn't seem fair that you shouldn't take another partner I'm sure he'd be the very first to agree."

"He suggested it," Quintin told her drily. "As a matter of fact, he's rather worried about it—thinks he's letting me down, and all that. But I shan't take another partner. If I want help"—he paused and looked at her calmly—"there's always you."

Sally absorbed this philosophy in silence.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Square Peg departed on the third of March, leaving Sally Ludlow with the comfortable and proud reflection of a good deed done. She would no longer be harrowed to the depths of a sympathetic soul by his heroic efforts to fit the round hole of pig-farming.

"He only needed the opportunity," Sally told Quintin triumphantly, "and now he's got it. It—it's rather a jolly feeling, Quintin, to think you've helped someone to—to get free."

And looking, in instinctive accordance with her words, out at the horizon, Sally missed the grimace that crinkled up Quintin's face as he lit a cigarette.

Quintin adhered to his determination to carry on single-handed. He worked hard, and alluded to Cavanagh's absence so seldom that Sally was vaguely piqued. The little thrill of pride occasioned by her successful deliverance of a Square Peg from his round hole became tempered by a more

personal view of the case; from a Cause he was most disconcertingly becoming plain Francis Cavanagh.

And of plain Francis Cavanagh the passing months brought no news at all.

"You don't find letter-boxes on glaciers," Quintin pointed out to Sally on that October day when she first alluded to the subject. "Only what d'you call 'em—crevasses, isn't it?—that you fall into if you aren't jolly careful." He scraped a very muddy boot on the bottom bar of the gate, and did not look at Sally. "However, I suppose you think a crevasse is more congenial to Cavanagh than a pig-farm, so that's all right"—which was, perhaps, unnecessarily brutal. Sally said nothing.

Before the pigs had accounted for the last of the acorns, she told Quintin it was absurd of him to contemplate Cavanagh's return from Life to mere existence devoted to Middle Whites.

"When he returns he will be famous in the world of science."

Quintin said cheerfully that pig-rearing on the lines they had adopted was also scientific. "Dry food and open-air, grass pens. You can't get rid of the idea of sties with muck a yard deep for the pigs to wallow in—that's the technical term, isn't it?—and the contents of the sink basket in a bucket for lunch. . . ."

Sally told him not to be disgusting. "There are tremendous opportunities," she added solemnly, "for a really brilliant man."

"Yes, I know. Everyone eats bacon," said Quintin thoughtfully.

"Someone with tact," said Sally, ignoring the interruption. "It's a remote part of Tibet. Colonel Patterson said the people might be hostile."

"Is the pig sacred there?" asked Quintin. "If so, he'd better not reveal his past."

"It won't be his future, anyway," retorted Sally, with a rather fiercely triumphant little laugh.

\* \* \* \* \*

After Christmas there came a cold snap, with sufficient ice and snow to remind Quintin of glaciers. He spoke of them in a gently reflective tone, and did not even notice that Sally's small face, looking out, rosy with the stinging cold, from a becoming muffling of blue wolf furs, grew suddenly white. The thaw came, and Quintin absently alluded to avalanches.

Snowdrops prinked up under the bare oaks on the hillside, and for the first time in her life Sally Ludlow felt the need of



distraction. She sought it, strangely, in the domain of the Middle Whites.

The first intimation she had of the return of the expedition was an entirely chance meeting with Colonel Patterson in London, one day when the wallflowers in the sunny garden were in full glory, and the apple-blossom just showing pink. Colonel Patterson, grey and lean, was not in the best of humours. The expedition had been something of a failure.

"Of course we shall make another attempt—probably take a bigger party—a fresh one." He looked at her rather grimly, then: "Look here, Sally," he said, "what made you write to me about young Cavanagh? You know he's not in the least suited to a job of this kind."

"Oh!" said Sally in a small voice. Her grey eyes widened. "He isn't—he hasn't—I mean—Quintin said there were crevasses."

"Crevasses?"

"That—people fell into."

Colonel Patterson assured her that the Square Peg had not fallen into a crevasse. He added drily that Cavanagh owed the omission rather to luck than to foresight.

"He's got grit enough for two. It isn't that. But I thought you understood, my dear Sally, that grit wasn't the only thing required for this affair. We wanted a man of picked ability and talent—men like Durrant and Cartwright." He named two members of the expedition. "You see, we had to deal with more problems than the actual climbing. The people were hostile, for one thing, and"—he smiled reminiscently—"fighting wasn't the solution there. Then there was the scientific side." He paused, looking at her small, unhappy face kindly enough. "You mustn't think I'm crabbing Cavanagh, my dear, for I'm not. It's just that it wasn't his job, and—I'm afraid you rather misled me as to his qualifications. We had to fill Greville's place in a hurry—that was unfortunate."

"Oh," said Sally, after a long, still pause, "then—then he—he won't be going the second time?"

The Colonel looked at her a little curiously as he gave her the answer she guessed. "No, he won't be going the second time."

"It—is a pity," said Sally.

But with that it seemed he did not agree. "My dear Sally"—he spoke with finality—"it isn't his job. Haven't you heard the saying concerning square pegs and round holes?"

"Oh!" said Sally helplessly. She

wondered whether she wanted to laugh, or not.

\* \* \* \* \*

She went back to the garden of the wallflowers and apple trees. She didn't tell Quintin that he had been right, after all. She didn't ask him if Cavanagh had written since his return to England. She was not apparently interested in the possibility of his resuming his job with the Middle Whites.

Two days later, on a cool, clear April morning, he opened the gate at the end of the wide walk and encountered Sally.

Sally said "Good morning!" and appraised his whole appearance at a glance which scarcely seemed to rest on him at all.

The Square Peg, who was a person of disconcerting directness, said: "You've seen the Colonel, haven't you, Sally? So you know—"

"He told me that you weren't going with the second expedition," said Sally slowly, and the Square Peg smiled wryly.

"Since I was fool enough to make the first a failure! I don't believe he told you that."

Sally looked at him, and there was defiance in her grey eyes. "That—isn't true," she said decidedly.

"Then he was a sportsman not to tell you. But it's true, all right. You see, with a small affair like that, every man counts. There was trouble with some tribesmen, and I thought a fight was the only solution, instead of the diplomatic tactics that were really the thing. I was on my own at the time, so I unfortunately queered things rather thoroughly. Diplomacy wasn't much use after declaring war. Anyway, it was my fault."

Sally, remembering the Colonel's words, said nothing. "So you see," added the Square Peg dully, "your faith in me wasn't justified."

Sally looked away from him across the hillside, where the beeches were in all the fluttering jade-silk bravery of April leaf against an April sky, with little puffs of silvery cloud. A sudden incredible understanding began to dawn.

"Your life here—you didn't really mind it, after all?" she said, and knew that it was the truth. "And—yet you left it and went. Why did you?"

"Because," he told her curtly, "I was fool enough to think I could justify your belief in me."

And that was all the explanation the



Square Peg gave of the thing that enrolled him in the lists of knights of all the ages who have fared forth to do their ladies' pleasure.

Sally found it enough, and herself at fault, and a little dazed. But she looked at him squarely. "You went—because of me?"

"Yes," said Cavanagh.

"And all the time"—Sally's voice was tragic—"I thought I was—setting you free."

The Square Peg suddenly smiled. "You couldn't do that, Sally," he said.

"Because of—the pigs?" Sally looked

down at her trimly brogued feet and added rather hurriedly: "My shoes are quite sensible to-day. We—we might go and look at the pens."

But Cavanagh made no move in acceptance of the invitation. He said quite simply that the freedom to which he alluded had nothing to do with pigs, but with herself.

"I—thought you knew. If only I were the brilliant sort of fellow you'd care for, instead of an ordinary—an ordinary——" He broke off, groping for a disparaging word.

"Dear," said Sally, finding it for him with a dazzling smile.

## FRAGRANT PALMATE ORCHIS.

**B**ORN of the moorland sweetness wild,  
 Born where the heather wind blows,  
 Her lone haunt but the gipsy child  
 And the herdsman knows.  
 Yet the unseen goat-bird, bleating  
 Now a-near and now retreating,  
 Lured me to her yesternoon—  
 Outspread wings and spurred shoon,  
 Gowned in purple and rose.

Where the king fern's mystery stirs,  
 Love-charms old and new  
 Holds she in those palms of hers  
 Dipped in nectar dew.  
 Secrets of our souls, long hidden  
 'Fore her stand confessed, unbidden,  
 Through the slumbrous deep mid-noon,  
 Like some half-remembered tune;  
 And your own heart, too,

Thrills in answer to her call.  
 Speeds your foot to find  
 Some forsaken one—home taken  
 Sudden, to heart and mind?

\* \* \* \* \*

Not alone in dreams you're meeting  
 Where the brooding goat-bird's bleating  
 Through the rapturous deep mid-noon  
 While this flower, with spurs to her shoon,  
 Roseate, scents the wind!

Alice E. GILLINGTON.



# MENDOZA SELLS HIMSELF

By WILLIAM CAINE

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

THE clocks of Chelsea had just struck ten in the morning. Anfitrion came into the studio with a card. Mendoza took it, glanced aside from his newspaper, and read :

MRS. GATACRE-BURTENSHAW.

He looked inquiringly at his man, who said : " Señor, it is a very large and very imperative lady. She wears furs, and she has pearls in her ears. But I do not get the impression that she comes to buy."

" Well," said Mendoza, " from what you say of her I do not get the impression that she comes to borrow. I suppose—since I'm not working—I must see her." He rose and stood, while Anfitrion brushed him down with a whisk-broom which he took from the pocket of his apron. A moment later the visitor was admitted. Mendoza waved her to a chair, but himself remained on his feet. It is the fool who sits to hear the tale of the unknown caller.

With Anfitrion, at the door, Mrs. Gatacre-Burtenshaw may have been imperative ; but now that she had gained her point and sat in the presence of his master, she bore herself with a quite becoming amiability. Her face was all smiles, her voice all honey. Mendoza judged that she was going to ask him to design a programme, without remuneration, for a charity *matinée*. Most assuredly he proposed to do nothing of the kind. Not, at any rate, for this Mrs. Gatacre-Burtenshaw, who did not at all please him. He disliked her powdered, sagging face ; he disliked her hard eyes and her harder mouth ; he disliked her fat ear-pearls and her voluminous sables ; he loathed her greasy voice.

Afoot, motionless and silent, he awaited upon his hearthrug the petition of this ambadress from a Bayswater committee, and prepared the expression of his infinite regrets.

" I do hope you will forgive this very early

call," she began, " but I couldn't wait—I simply couldn't. It was only last night—or, rather, very early this morning—that I thought of appealing to you, Mr. Mendoza. I had to come at the very first possible moment. Not a wink of sleep all night. Not a wink. Oh, Mr. Mendoza, I am in such trouble, and you are, I verily believe, the only man alive who can help me. So please, please say you forgive me. You have never been a mother, but I'm sure you can make allowances for a mother's anxiety about her boy." She clasped her hands and leaned forward. In her voice a hint of tears had come.

Mendoza ceased to occupy himself with the preparation of polite excuses. He had to do with a much more formidable creature than any charitable ambadress.

" It is true," he said, " that I have never been a mother, but I have known several, and I should not dream of failing to make allowances for anything a mother may do where she conceives the welfare of her offspring to be at stake. Believe me, my dear lady, there is nothing for me to forgive you. And so, shall we not, perhaps, come to the point ? "

" Indeed, yes ! " she cried. " Indeed, yes, Mr. Mendoza. I understand you. Your time is valuable. Well, I shall not take up more than a very few minutes of it. I want to speak to you, if I may, about my son Charlie. I want your advice and I want your help. Charlie is my only child, Mr. Mendoza. He is all I have in the world. Absolutely"—she unloosed her thousand-guinea sable coat and threw it open—" all I have in the world. His dear father died ten years ago, when Charlie was a little fellow of nine. Ever since he has been my one interest in life. The dearest boy, Mr. Mendoza, until he took this notion into his head of going in for Art——"

" Will you not please tell me what you



want me to do?" said Mendoza. "Is it, by any chance, to take your son as a pupil? Because, if so, I regret——"

"Oh, my dear Mr. Mendoza," she exclaimed, "but quite the contrary! I want you to let him come and show you his drawings, and then I want you to tell him that he has no talent—in short, to discourage him. I simply cannot endure the thought of *my* son becoming an artist. There has never been anything of that sort in our family. Never! I can't imagine how the boy came by such a low idea."

"For the caprices of heredity," said Mendoza, "there is no accounting. Probably your son has to thank for his disgraceful tastes some blackguard painter who's been dead this five hundred years or more."

The lady pinched her lips together. "I'm afraid," she said, "we don't go *quite* so far back as all that. But"—she abandoned this subject—"you will help me, won't you? I mean you *will* look at Charlie's drawings and tell him that he can never hope to do any good as a painter. Won't you?"

"But," said Mendoza, "how, my dear lady, am I to give you such a promise without having seen your son's work? Suppose he has a very great talent. Such a thing is always possible, even in your family. The caprices of heredity can be astonishingly astonishing."

"Oh," she cried piteously, "if you won't help me, wherever am I to turn? You are the only man who can do this for me, because Charlie thinks more of your word than of anybody's. He is simply a Mendoza worshipper. He collects your drawings as they appear in the magazines. He must have hundreds, if not thousands. It is his dream to become a great, a supreme black-and-white artist like yourself. A word from you would have more weight with him—I know it—than a whole sermon from any other artist. In fact, I feel certain that if you will only see him and look at some of his drawings, and tell him frankly that they're no good, he will throw up this whole mad, degrading scheme of Art and settle down contentedly to the honourable career on which I have set my heart for him."

"And that is?" asked Mendoza.

"What else," she inquired in her turn, "but politics? Like his dear father, you know," she added in explanation, while Mendoza turned aside to straighten his face. "Mr. Burtenshaw," she went on, "was in Parliament for the three years

before he died. Had he lived he must have gone very far, for he was a splendid speaker, and, of course, his money would have counted. But it was not to be. Providence had arranged things differently for us. I think you can now understand, Mr. Mendoza, why I am so anxious to see Charlie in politics. I feel that he and I owe it to his dear father's memory to carry on his work to the best of our ability. I want my boy, too, to marry well. My money will count again there. As a rising young politician he will have plenty of chances of finding a wife to do him credit and bring him, maybe, both fortune and influence. But if he becomes an artist, how is he ever to meet any girls but common models and students and such studio riff-raff?"

"Quite," said Mendoza, "and that would never do at all, would it? But supposing, dear madam," he inquired, "supposing your son insists on becoming an artist against your wishes? What then?"

Her eyes narrowed and her lower jaw came forward. "Why, then," she said in a sort of snarl, "he will have to look to himself. He hasn't a penny but what I give him, and never will have until I die. Before I'll consent to this folly, let alone help him in it, I'll see him starve in the gutter, the young fool!"

Mendoza realised that she would be as good as her word. An impulse assailed him to put her out of his studio by the shoulders. He repressed it.

"I sympathise deeply with you, Mrs. Burtenshaw," he said, "in your most natural wish to see your son saved from the squalid life of an artist and engaged in the most noble and glorious occupation that is open to any man. I mean, of course, politics. But I still find myself faced with the difficulty which I have indicated. How am I to tell him that he has no talent if I find that he has, perhaps, an unusual one?"

"He hasn't," she snapped. "You may take it from me."

"Ah," he replied, "but that I'm afraid I can't do. And again I say, supposing I find him to be really gifted, what then? If you could only let me see one or two examples of his work."

She put her hand inside her coat and produced a large envelope, out of which she took a sheet of paper. "Since you insist," she said, "here is something he's done. You have only to look at it to see that it's hopeless. Dreadfully vulgar, I call it, like everything he draws, poor boy. He doesn't seem



able to do anything that I call pretty or even pleasant. Always awful-looking scarecrows like this."

Mendoza took the drawing from her, laid it on the table, and bent over it in silence. It represented a villainous-looking shaggy fellow, clothed for piracy, with a beltful of pistols and knives, an enormous cutlass in his hand, sea-boots, head done up in a handkerchief, and over that a great plumed hat. It was very far from being a masterpiece of drawing. It was, indeed, quite evidently the work of a hand that had never received any competent guidance at all. But beneath its obvious crudity Mendoza's eye at once discerned a promise of greatly better things.

"But, my dear madam," he said presently, "this drawing possesses very great interest. It has considerable humour, to begin with, and it has been done with enthusiasm. Your son doted on this ruffian while he was making him. Now, you must know that humour and enthusiasm are among the very few things that an artist cannot be taught. Anyone can learn to draw. I should say, from this one example, that your son ought to do well in Art, perhaps even prodigiously well. Could I see more of his work, I could pronounce with greater confidence. I shall be very happy to see more if he will bring it here one day."

Mrs. Gatacre-Burtenshaw picked up the drawing and put it back in its envelope. "My dear Mr. Mendoza," she said harshly, "don't you understand or *won't* you understand that I haven't come here to ask you to encourage my son in what I regard as nothing less than wicked folly? I want you to tell him that he is no good at drawing and never will be—that he is hopeless, in short. Surely that's plain enough."

"Yes," said Mendoza, "that's plain enough. But will you tell me why I should do anything of the kind? Don't *you* understand, dear madam, that I find that drawing of your son's most promising? Why should I tell him that he is hopeless?"

She sat for a moment or two, frowning and tapping her foot on the floor. Mendoza knew that she was hating him. At last her face cleared, and, "I trust, Mr. Mendoza," she said in her more honeyed tones, "that you don't imagine that I'm asking you to criticise my son's work for nothing. Of course, I shall be only too glad to pay you what fee you ask. And where my boy's future is concerned, I am not likely to be stingy, eh?"

Mendoza's eyes hardened suddenly and his face grew dark. Mrs. Gatacre-Burtenshaw was looking studiously away from him, or she might have received a fright and taken a warning. He said no word, but waited for her to go on. She went on.

"Only," she drawled, while she stared fixedly at her toes, "it is to be understood, without any question at all, that you tell him that he can't draw and that he never will draw. But you needn't expect that I'm going to be such a fool as to pay you a large fee—nor any fee—for strengthening this young idiot in his defiance of his mother."

The wrath had cleared away, as if by magic, from Mendoza's face. Now he suddenly assumed an expression of quite diabolical cunning. He leaned forward from his hips, and, speaking very softly, inquired: "When you say a large fee, Mrs. Burtenshaw, may I ask what sort of a figure you have in your mind?"

She looked up quickly and met his eye at last. "Is this business?" she asked. He nodded.

"Then," she said, "I have such a figure as"—she paused—"a hundred guineas in my mind," she concluded.

Mendoza straightened up and spread his hands wide. "My dear lady," he said, "I'm afraid you don't quite understand with whom you are dealing. I am Mendoza. A hundred guineas might be a very pretty little fee for some artists, but I cannot pretend that it says very much to me. If this is your scale, let me recommend you to apply elsewhere. But if you mean to hire Mendoza, you must adjust your views of his value. If I take your money, I may most probably be required to perjure myself and so betray the Art which I adore by turning away from following it a young man of genius. I will not touch this business for less than a thousand pounds."

Mrs. Gatacre-Burtenshaw bounded in her chair and uttered a small strangled scream. "A thousand pounds!" she gasped. "But you must be mad, Mr. Mendoza. You must be utterly mad. Whoever heard of paying an artist such a sum for criticising a boy's drawings? It's fantastic. Or are you joking, perhaps?"

"Where money is involved," said Mendoza, "I never joke. I have named my fee. Whether or no you pay it, dear madam, is your affair entirely. In return for your cheque for a thousand pounds I will give you my promise to tell your son that his



drawings are worthless, but I will not do it for two hundred pounds, nor for three hundred pounds, nor yet for nine hundred and ninety-nine pounds nineteen shillings and elevenpence three farthings. So let us have no haggling, if you please. Accept my terms or reject them. It is all one to me, so long as you make your choice quickly, for in five minutes I must be at work."

To his immense surprise she capitulated without a struggle. Evidently a lady of very exorbitant wealth. A thousand pounds was, indeed, a good deal more than she had expected to pay, but what was a thousand pounds where her Charlie's political career was in danger?

"It is understood," she stipulated craftily, "that I am to be present when

your cheque for one thousand pounds. By Thursday it will be cleared. I shall expect you and your son here on Friday afternoon at three o'clock."

He crossed to the door and opened it. A moment later he was alone. "Piff! Paff!" he said. "The air needs freshening in here." And he threw the window wide. Then he went to his telephone and got into communication with his friend William Orchard, junior partner in the firm of Orchard and Penfeather, Solicitors, of Bedford Row.

"Bill," he said, "you dine with me to-night, isn't it? Here at the studio, Bill. I have a small conspiracy to organise with you, Bill. You come? Good! Seventy-three, dear boy, as usual."

He rang off.



"No word said Charlie. And Charlie's unpleasant mother—she kept silence, too."

you give Charlie your opinion of his drawings."

Mendoza bowed. "That," he said, "is only fair. If you are to pay your money for a promise, you are entitled to see that promise carried out. But now you cannot complain if I, too, show myself a little careful. To-day is Tuesday. To-morrow morning I receive

## II.

THE cheque came; was cleared. Friday came and brought back Mrs. Gatarce-Burtenshaw. She was accompanied by her Charlie. Her Charlie was accompanied by his portfolio of drawings.

He proved to be a fat-faced, fat-bodied youth of, Mendoza judged, some nineteen



springs. Anything less like a budding genius you couldn't wish to see. He had a round head, round eyes, a round nose, round cheeks, and a round chin, also round tortoiseshell spectacles. He blinked. He was

solemn. His general effect was owlsh and amiable. His hair was fur, close-cropped everywhere and mouse-coloured.

He accommodated mother and son with chairs, took the portfolio from the boy's hand, laid it on the table, opened it, lit a cigarette, lifted a sheet of white paper and disclosed the topmost drawing.

About its subject there could be no question—Gulliver's first waking in Lilliput. Over the Man Mountain, securely anchored to earth by ten thousand threads,



"No word said Mendoza while he went through them."

He was very nervous and excited, and, as he entered the studio, succeeded in stumbling over his own feet.

Mendoza thought: "Perjury, I believe, is not, after all, going to be required of me, and the widow, it seems, is to get her money back. Alas, how pleased she will be! But what kind of a politician, I wonder, will she ever make of this globular innocent?"

the little people swarmed by the score and hundred. An ambitious subject enough. A subject to prove the quality of any draftsman.

Charlie had not triumphed over it. It had, indeed, beaten him handsomely. Yet Mendoza, even as his eyes fell upon the picture, knew certainly that in this bun-



faced child there were the makings of a notable illustrator. Everywhere the drawing of the thing was to seek; everywhere its composition had come to grief. But it was all alive with imagination. The humour, too, which had informed the pirate was here present. No two of these Liliputians were alike. No two of them were in the same attitude. No two were clad in quite the same way. It was a crowd—and a big and a busy and a funny one—of clearly differentiated individuals. What did it matter that Gulliver was a clumsy failure, that the landscape was no better? Nothing. The Liliputians proclaimed their creator a lad to be reckoned with.

Mendoza slid his eyes sideways and took a look at Charlie. The plump boy sat very still, right on the edge of his chair. His face was white and his forehead was damp. He stared at the carpet. Heavily he breathed through his nose—heavily. Mendoza took up the second drawing.

Three ruffians, one with an eye-patch, one with a wooden leg, and one with a hook for a hand, sat boozing at a table. They wore tatters of eighteenth-century design—breeches, three-cornered hats, long-skirted coats. They roared a chorus. Again drawing and composition were of small account; again the figures lived and breathed. One was a cruel beast, the second a sentimental sot, the third a very cunning devil. Such were their characters beyond all possibility of mistake.

Mendoza took up the third drawing, the fourth, the fifth, and so to the end of the pile. All were ill-drawn, all ill-conceived, and they were as varied and jolly and exhilarating to Mendoza as a Bartholomew Fair.

No word said Mendoza while he went through them. No word said Charlie. And Charlie's unpleasant mother—she kept silence, too. The verdict she desired was bought and paid for. She was there to hear it pronounced. She had nothing to say.

Mendoza put up the drawings, returned them to their portfolio, tied its strings together, and placed it in its owner's hands. "Mr. Burtenshaw," he said, "I regret to inform you that in my opinion your drawings are worthless. You will never do anything of value. I recommend you to abandon all thought of Art and to take up politics, as your mother desires. We cannot usefully prolong this interview. Good day to you. To you, Mrs. Burtenshaw, good day."

He opened the door.

Charlie rose with a sob and, clutching his portfolio to his bosom and unmindful of his manners, ran out of the room. His mother followed him more slowly. As she passed Mendoza she said: "I would rather like to know, Mr. Mendoza, if that was your true opinion."

"Madam," said Mendoza, "there was nothing about that, I believe, in our bargain."

She laughed and went.

Mendoza opened a window and leaned far out. He took his handkerchief from his sleeve and waved it once, twice, thrice.

Then he went back to his work.

### III.

THE story accompanies Mr. Charles Burtenshaw on to the Embankment. His mother he left to find her way home by herself. Just now he couldn't bear his mother's society at all. He was sick and sore and in no mood to be told that she had told him so, in no mood to listen to her triumphant gibes. Merciless always in victory, how she was going to spread herself and crow! Well, she must wait awhile for her amusement. He didn't know what he might say or do, should she set about him before he had had time to pull himself together a bit. He sat down on a bench, put his head in his hands, and gave himself up to gloom.

Mendoza's verdict on his work had been a horrid blow for this young man. That it was the right one he never doubted. Who was he to doubt the judgment of a Mendoza? That it could have been bought he never dreamed. Well though he knew his mother, heartily though he disliked her, he was too simple-minded to imagine her or anyone plotting such an infamy.

Yes, Mendoza had spoken, and hope was in the dust. He was no good. His drawings were worthless. He was recommended by Mendoza—by Mendoza, his god—to abandon all thought of Art and to take up politics, as his mother desired. Politics! Politics was all he was fit for!

With that the poor devil burst fairly into tears. At nineteen we take our little disappointments so very hardly, do we not?

His seizure didn't last long. Shame dried his eyes for him and stilled his heaving shoulders. He passed from despair to anger. He jumped up, filled with the brave resolve to go home and have it jolly well out with her. He stood frowning and biting his lips, working himself up to this adventure. Yes, he would defy her—he would



refuse to go to Oxford, refuse to give up his drawing for her or anyone. What else, in heaven's name, did he care for? And why, in heaven's name, shouldn't he do it, even if he was no good at it? How much good would he be at Oxford? How much good would he be in Parliament? None! None! None! And who was she to dictate to him what he should or shouldn't do with his life? She didn't have to live it. Oh, if he only had some money of his own! Fifty pounds a year would be enough. But he hadn't a sixpence. How could he defy her? He was at her mercy absolutely.

He became aware that someone was speaking his name. He directed his eyes upon this person, a slender young man, respectably attired. "Yes," he said, "I am Mr. Charles Burtenshaw. What do you want?"

"A note for you, sir." A note was proffered. Charles took it, opened it and read:

"If Charles Burtenshaw, of 18, Elm Row, Chelsea, will call at the offices of Messrs. Orchard and Penfeather, 96, Bedford Row, he will hear of something to his advantage."

"I am from Orchard's, sir," said the young man. "I have instructions to bring you there at once, if you please."

"Something to my advantage, eh?" said Charles wonderingly. "Sounds like a legacy. Is it?"

"I'm sure I can't say, sir. Perhaps the simplest thing would be for you to come along and find out for yourself."

Charles, most naturally, took this advice. A cab was hailed by the clerk, and twenty minutes later Charles was ushered into the presence of Mr. William Orchard.

"Mr. Burtenshaw," that gentleman began, when his visitor was seated, "I need waste no words in telling you what you have to know. A client of ours has placed with us a sum of one thousand pounds for your benefit. Don't ask who this client is, or why he or she has done this, for I shall not tell you. All you are concerned to know is that each week, on calling here, you will be paid four pounds until the corpus is exhausted—that is to say, you can count on this income for close on five years. What you do with it is your own affair entirely. Here"—and he laid four sovereigns in front of the astounded young man—"is your first weekly instalment. Kindly sign this receipt. Hereafter you will please to get your money from the cashier downstairs. Thank you. And so good day to you."

"But—but——" stammered Charles.

"No buts, Mr. Burtenshaw," said Mr. Orchard kindly. "Our business is quite over. Quite. Henry"—he spoke to the young man of the Embankment, who now entered the room—"show Mr. Burtenshaw out."

"But—but——" Charles cried. Henry advanced upon him.

"This way, sir," he said, "if you please." Charles found himself in the passage. In one hand he clutched his portfolio. In the other were four one-pound notes.

"But—but——" he said, and found himself in the street.

#### IV.

THE story skips four years.

#### V.

ANFITRION came into the studio with a card which informed Mendoza that Mr. Charles Burtenshaw requested the favour of an interview. A moment later the young man was admitted.

"Well, Mr. Burtenshaw," said Mendoza, as he held out his hand, "and what can I do for you to-day? At our last meeting I fear I was not very amiable. I trust you are going to give me a chance to appear in a pleasanter light."

"I hope so," said Charles, "though I'm going to ask you to do exactly what you did then—I mean, to look at some of my work and tell me whether it's of any value."

"You have not, then, embraced a political career?"

"I have not. But look at this." He took from his portfolio the current copy of *The Prattler*, opened it, and spread it out on the table, disclosing a double-page pen-drawing of Gulliver made prisoner by the Lilliputians. It was signed "Charles Burtenshaw." It was exquisite.

Mendoza examined it carefully. "Yes," he said at last, "I was wrong when I told you that you would never do anything worth while in this way. I suppose that is what you've come to hear me say."

"It is," said Charles. "Then you think well of this thing?"

"I think," said Mendoza, "that it is a vastly fine bit of work. I congratulate you on it sincerely. It has everything that that other one lacked. You draw now like a workman. Your design is admirable. You exhibit a lively and generous fancy, and there is humour in your every line. In a word, the thing is as good as gold. I am very glad that



you didn't allow me to discourage you. Had you done so, the world would to-day be the poorer by a very considerable artist, perhaps by a master. But that the next ten years will tell us."

Charles flushed with pleasure. "Ah," he said, "but if it hadn't been for my unknown benefactor——"

"So," said Mendoza, "you had an unknown benefactor, had you? Tell me all about it."

Charles told him all about it. "Of course," he went on, "that made me independent of my mother. As the money wasn't truly mine, but only to be doled out to me week by week, she couldn't lay any claim to it. I left her house at once, took a room, and started work at Montfort's school. I lived hard and worked hard. When I'd got all I could get from Montfort, I went to Paris. I'm just back from there. This is my first published drawing, and I still have three hundred pounds to my credit at Orchard's. My mother has disowned me, and I shall never get a penny from her, but that doesn't worry me at all. In fact, the only sorrow I have in the world just at present is that I don't know who it was that put that money at my disposal four years ago. Orchard, confound him, remains as secret as the tomb."

"The man, after all, is a solicitor," said Mendoza. "You can't expect him to betray a client."

"No, I suppose not; but I should be glad if he would, in this case. I have a few things I want very much to say to that marvellous person. Gratitude such as mine likes to get itself expressed, you know."

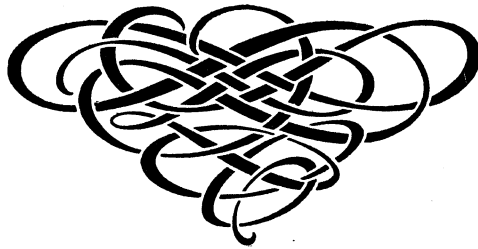
"Ah, well," said Mendoza, "I shouldn't worry if I were you. Your best plan is go right ahead and make a big success of yourself. I fancy your unknown benefactor will be quite content with that. He's evidently an eccentric, and he probably doesn't care about being thanked. But tell me one thing. When you found yourself independent of your mother and able to study drawing, did the adverse verdict which I had pronounced on your work weigh not at all with you?"

"Of course it did," said Charles, "but not for long. I decided by and by that you were probably mistaken—at least, I hoped you were. But, anyhow, I had to draw."

"Then you don't bear any grudge against me for being wrong?"

"Not I," said Charles. "Indeed, it would have been wonderful if you'd seen any kind of promise in those rotten things I showed you."

"Quite," said Mendoza.



## FETTERED LOVE.

**I** FETTERED Love and held him: when he lay,  
His shining wings outspread,  
Then was my house of gladness turned to clay,  
And all my vision fled.

"Nay, Love," I wept, "take, then, thy course afar!"  
And struck his chains apart.  
And then it seemed Love ranged from star to star,  
Yet lingered in my heart.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.





CLASS FOR MEN, WHO EVENTUALLY TAKE CHARGE OF MOTOR PUMPS, ROUND AN ENGINE WHICH IS BEING GIVEN THE PERIODICAL PUMPING TEST TO WHICH EVERY PUMP IN THE BRIGADE IS SUBJECTED.

# LONDON'S FIRE BRIGADE ITS TRAINING AND WORK

DESCRIBED AND ILLUSTRATED BY MEREDITH FRADD

"PULL alarm and wait for engine" is a slogan which catches the eye wherever one goes in London, but very few people have any conception of the wonderful organisation which automatically functions when an alarm of fire is given. The purport of this article is to reveal the workings of a Fire Brigade unequalled in the whole world, a body of men absolutely fearless in their amazingly prompt response to a call to save life and property, who are supplied with appliances for fire-fighting which successfully bear comparison with any mechanical devices of the kind.

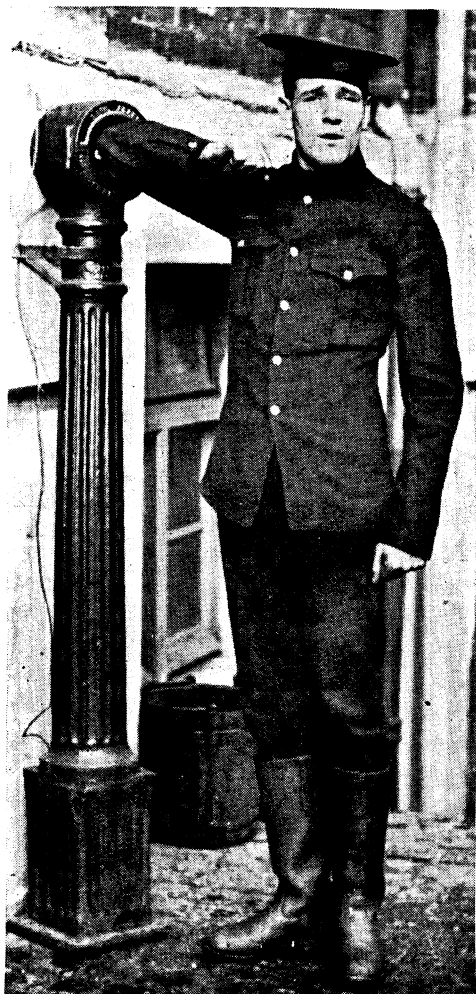
One of my earliest recollections of London when I came to it at the age of eight years is of three horse-drawn engines meeting in Ludgate Circus on the way to a

fire in Farringdon Street. Since then a truly marvellous reorganisation of London's Fire Brigade has taken place. First came the replacing of cumbersome hand escapes, which meant that the firemen were exhausted by the time they reached a fire, by those drawn by horses, and more recently by the introduction of the motor fire escape and the modern motor-propelled pump in place of the old steam engine, the fire under the boiler of which had to be lighted when a call was received. This article, then, falls into two sections: the call and what happens when it comes, and the training of the men to be splendidly ready for it, with a reference to the hive of industry in the workshops at Southwark Bridge Road headquarters.

A street fire alarm is pulled—and a



photograph here reproduced shows the proper way in which to break the glass so as to obviate the attentions of a doctor for a badly cut hand—and instantly a bell rings and a small disc showing the position of the alarm pulled drops on the call board of the nearest fire station. Within a few seconds, whether it be mid-day or mid-



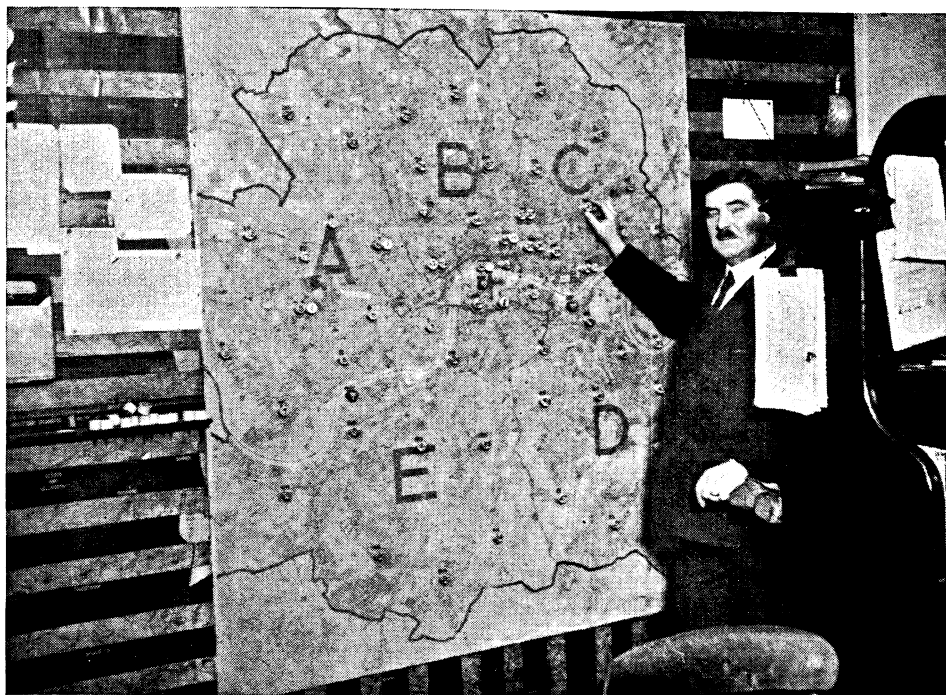
THE RIGHT WAY OF BREAKING THE GLASS AND USING A STREET FIRE ALARM.

night, a motor escape capable of reaching to a height of about fifty feet is on its way to the scene of the fire, manned by a crew of four men, and another few seconds suffice for the despatch of a motor pump with a further five men from that station, while at the same time yet another motor pump, ordered from the next nearest

station, turns out. Thus within a minute of the pulling of the alarm, or of the receipt of a message by telephone, some fourteen men, a motor escape, and two motor pumps are speeding on their way to the scene of danger. Should the call come from the City or other danger zone, packed with thousands of work people or goods valued in millions of pounds, or both, the "turn-out" of many more men and appliances takes place on the first fire call. But this is not all, for, simultaneously with the despatch of men and appliances from the station which receives the call, a message is telephoned through to headquarters of the Fire Brigade. The photograph on page 551 shows the switch-board through which comes every call received in any district within the one hundred and seventeen square miles area covered by the London Fire Brigade. In this watch-room is an enormous map of London with every fire station marked by a removable plug bearing that station's distinctive number. Immediately a message is received that a certain station has turned out, the numbered plug is removed and a plug with the word "Fire" is substituted. What further help shall be ordered now depends on further messages which will be telephoned through by the first officer to reach the fire, and these messages are generally sent by means of a telephone attached to the nearest fire alarm. This important duty falls upon the Senior Superintendent, who acts as Mobilisation Officer. In the case of a fire necessitating a "district call," which means the attendance of some fifteen appliances, or a "brigade call," which still further increases the number to perhaps thirty-five or even fifty appliances, the Mobilisation Officer has not only to decide which different stations shall send help, but to call in from outlying stations appliances to take the places of those called away. When it is remembered that within twenty-four hours as many as fifty-six alarms have been received, and a fair average is twenty-five, and that to each individual case appliances have been instantly despatched, it will be readily understood that the organisation under the Chief Officer—Mr. Arthur R. Dyer, A.M.I.C.E.—is perfectly arranged for smoothly-working efficiency.

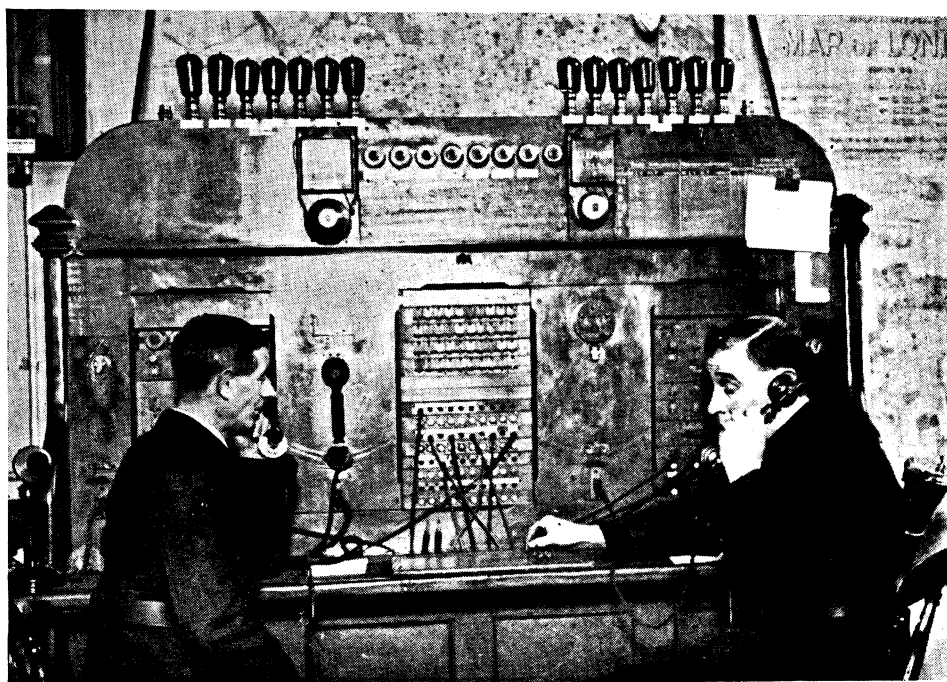
Before dealing with the training of the men, perhaps it will be best to detail the various types of appliances that, free of charge, are put at the disposal of people





A MAP OF LONDON AT HEADQUARTERS WITH EVERY FIRE STATION MARKED BY A REMOVABLE PLUG, FOR WHICH ONE WITH THE WORD "FIRE" IS SUBSTITUTED WHEN A CERTAIN STATION HAS TURNED OUT.

*Superintendent Hollington, Senior Superintendent and Mobilisation Officer, standing by the map.*



RECEIVING A CALL AT THE SWITCHBOARD AT HEADQUARTERS THROUGH WHICH COMES EVERY CALL FROM WITHIN THE AREA OF 117 SQUARE MILES.



living or working within the radius covered by the London County Council.

At the moment of writing there are seventy-six motor escapes capable of reaching a height of about fifty-five feet; nine motor turnable ladders capable of reaching a height of about eighty-five feet, which are fitted with a swivelled nozzle enabling a fireman who has been hoisted in the middle of a street to direct a powerful stream of water into a burning building; eighty-seven

fully-equipped coffee stall, at which men parched with smoke or soaked to the skin with water at a big fire, can get hot coffee and refreshments. The authorised fire staff numbers one thousand nine hundred and thirty-one, to which has to be added the technical, administrative, clerical and workshop staff, numbering a further hundred and eighty. There is a length of fifty-five miles of hose distributed all over London, thirty thousand hydrants are placed in

streets, and one thousand six hundred and forty of the little red alarm posts are perched in the most get-at-able places. There are sixty-two fire stations and three river stations. During 1923 seven thousand two hundred and twenty-seven calls were received and four thousand eight hundred and twenty-four fires were dealt with. The difference between the number of calls received and fires attended is accounted for by chimney fires and false alarms, caused in some cases by accident, but in many cases mischievously. In this connection it is well to stress the point that it is the duty of everyone who sees

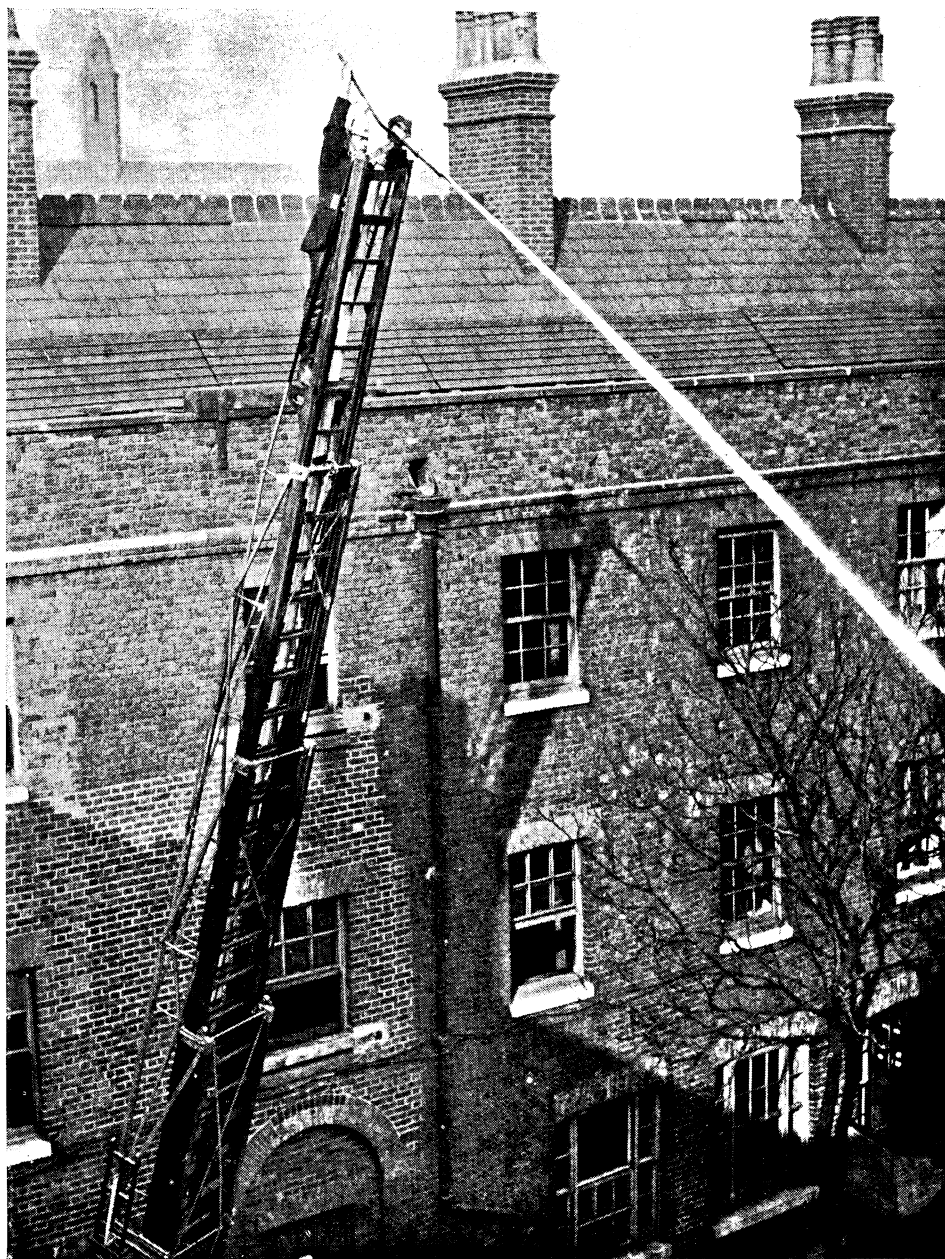


A FIRE-ESCAPE ON ITS WAY THROUGH THE STREETS.

motor pumps with an average pumping capacity of about five hundred gallons a minute; an emergency tender equipped with smoke helmets; searchlights; oxy-acetylene cutting plant for cutting through steel doors or ship's decks, etc.; fresh air blowers for clearing a basement of smoke; four river floats to tackle the big riverside fires that occur; motor cars for officers, motor lorries and motor tenders, and one most useful and original adjunct to the maintenance of the Brigade's efficiency, a

an alarm pulled to follow, and if possible to secure the detention of, the person giving the alarm, if there is any doubt as to the genuineness of the call. Let every reader remember this. It is the first few minutes that count in the saving of life and property from fire, and a false alarm in his or her district may call the local station away at the very moment when a serious fire occurs in his or her home. The penalty for giving a false alarm is twenty pounds or three months' imprisonment, and it would be





A FIREMAN ON ONE OF THE TURN-TABLE LADDERS SOME EIGHTY FEET HIGH PLAYING A HOSE.

well if magistrates would always sentence offenders to imprisonment.

Mechanical perfection is often useless unless in the hands of competent men ; and men competent to deal fearlessly with the saving of life and property from fire can become available only after the most intensive training under the direction of officers who have specialised in one or other of the several departments that

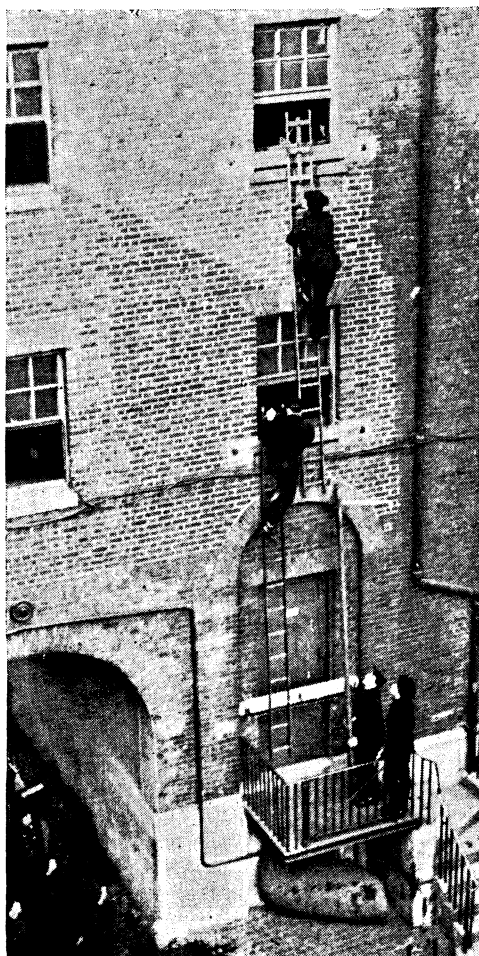
together compose the London Fire Brigade. Upon the Chief Officer, his assistant officers, and superintendents who possess knowledge based upon hourly contact with fires, their multitudinous causes and the devious ways by which they can be overcome, rests the responsibility for the training and efficiency of the Brigade.

The area covered by the London Fire Brigade is divided into north and south.

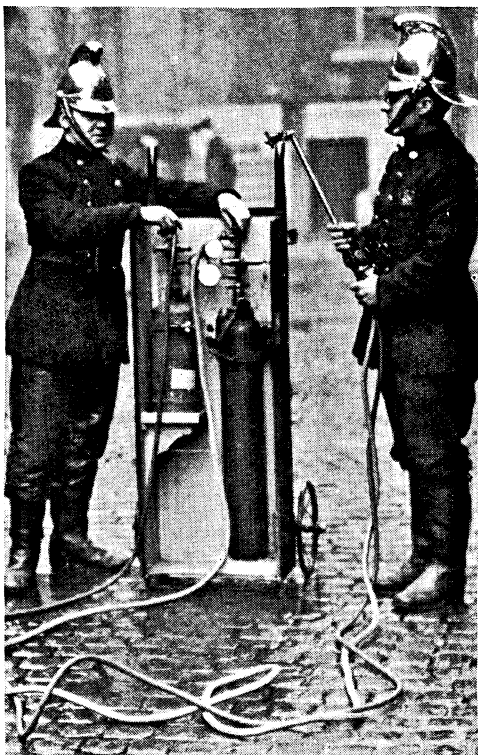


Major C. C. B. Morris, M.C., is Senior Divisional Officer in charge of the Southern Division, which comprises London south of the Thames and a portion of the City and central London, and the river service, with Capt. B. Miles, M.C., as Assistant Divisional Officer. The Northern Division comprises London north of the Thames, with the exception of a portion of the City and central London, and is under Commander A. N. G. Firebrace, R.N. (Retd.), with Major F. W. Jackson, D.S.O., as Assistant Divisional Officer.

The training of recruits for the Brigade is so exacting that it results in only the very best type of manhood ever responding to a London fire call. In the old days the rule was that recruits must have had some years



HOOK LADDER DRILL FOR THE SCALING OF A BUILDING AGAINST WHICH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PITCH AN ESCAPE.



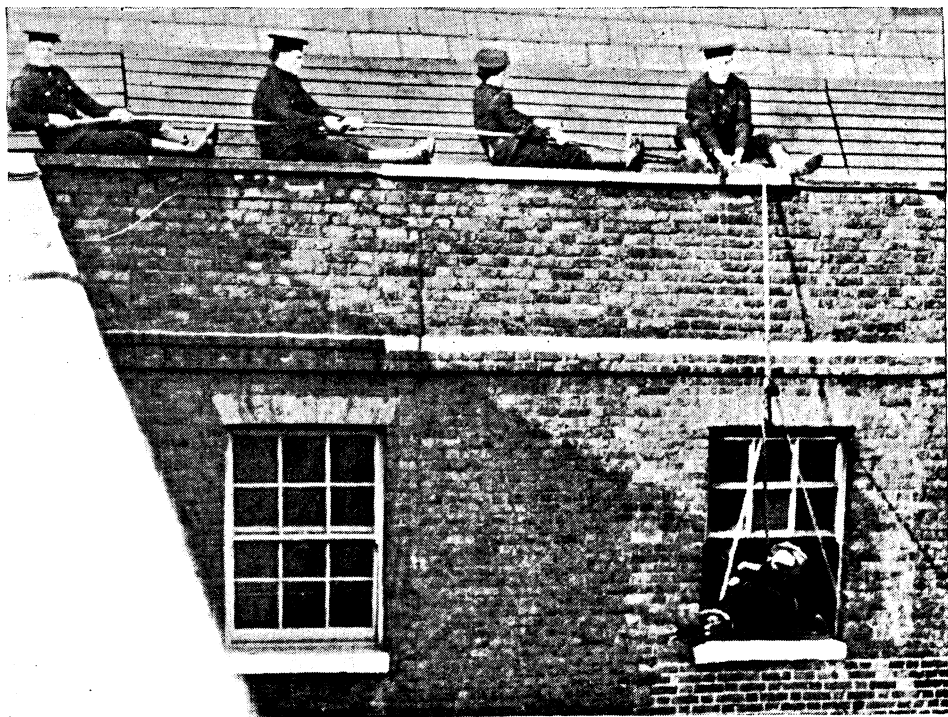
OXY-ACETYLENE CUTTING PLANT FOR CUTTING THROUGH STEEL DOORS, SHIP'S DECKS, ETC.

on board ship, but to-day any man who can pass the tests is accepted. Curiously enough it is in the chest measurement standard of thirty-seven inches, and thirty-eight and a half inches when expanded, that a large percentage of applicants fail, and one successful applicant out of one hundred is about the average. Another test is the pulling one, in which a man has practically to raise two hundred and forty pounds to a height of about twenty-five feet in forty seconds. These tests and the medical examination passed, and character references having been found satisfactory, a recruit is drafted to drills under the tuition of different officers experienced in special departments, and each day training is given in hook ladder drill, by means of which a house can be scaled when it is impossible to pitch an escape; rescue by lifeline is undertaken, and the task of lowering of injured persons on a small scaling ladder as a stretcher is practised. Jumping from a height into a sheet is another test of nerves. The proper way to carry an unconscious person; the rapid handling of





THE IMMENSE FORCE WITH WHICH THE MODERN FIRE ENGINE THROWS ITS JETS OF WATER NECESSITATES MORE THAN ONE MAN TO HOLD THE NOZZLE IN POSITION.



PRACTISING RESCUE BY LIFE LINE.



the escapes and the correct way to hold a hose and direct the volume of water, all come into a course of tuition which covers a period of several months. There are also classes for men who will eventually take charge of motor pumps, and a photograph here reproduced shows one of these classes round an engine which is being given the periodical pumping test to which every pump in the Brigade is subjected.

There is always a fascinated crowd to watch the weekly drill, which is not only an exhibition of drill, but also a realistic response to a fire call, rescues being made from a high building and smoke helmets used in a basement which belches forth dense smoke, with a turnout of all the appliances in exactly the same way as when a call is received. The photograph reproduced on page 553 shows a fireman on one of the turn-table ladders some eighty feet high. Another photograph illustrates the method of attacking a fire, and another the apparatus for restoring persons overcome with smoke; the one on page 555 gives a good idea of the immense force with which the modern fire engine throws its jets of water, necessitating more than one man to hold the nozzle in position. One of the latest appliances carried on all fire engines is the "foam" type extinguisher filled with a mixture which falls like snow around blazing petrol or tar and completely blots out the flames.

The appliances are not actually made

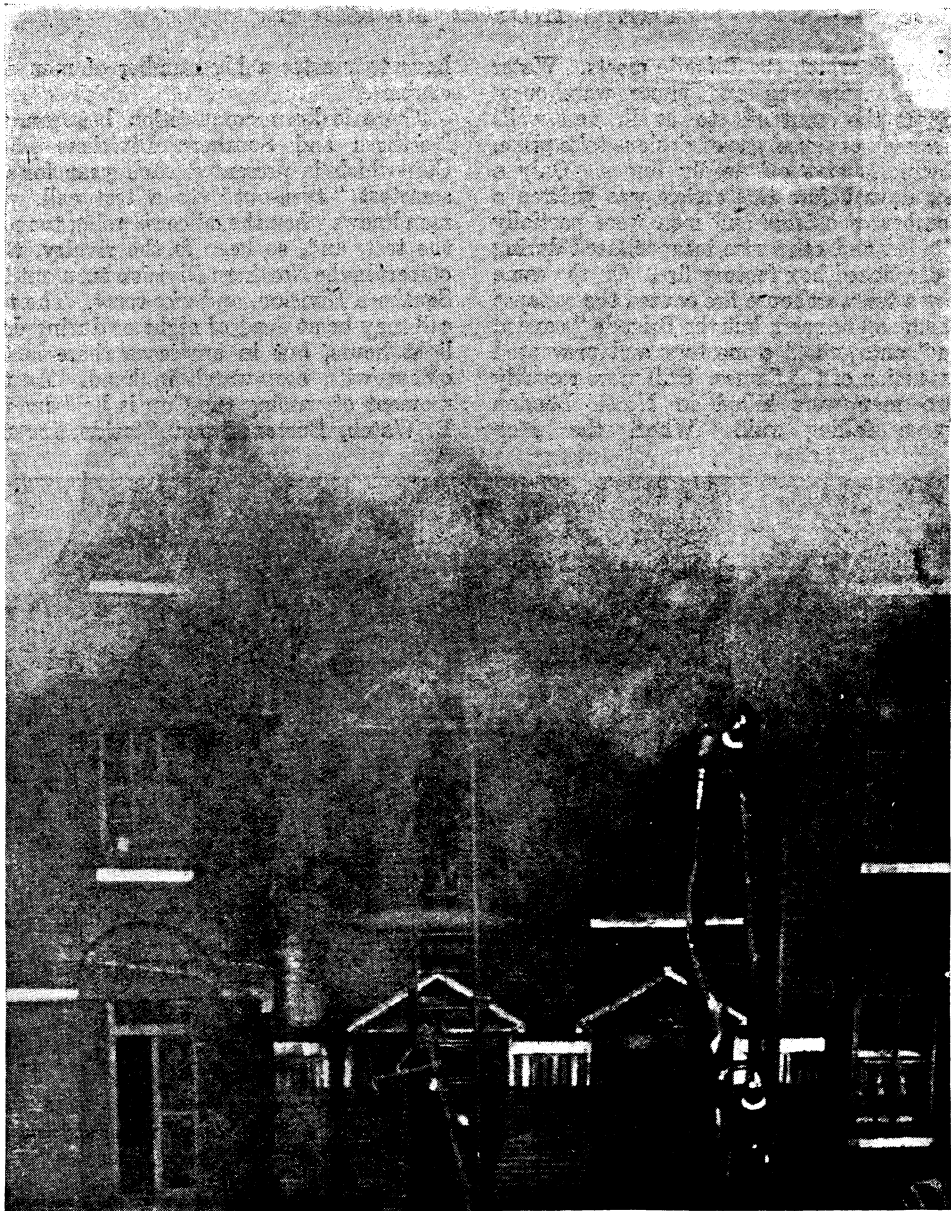


SMOKE HELMETS ARE USED AS PROTECTION AGAINST  
A DENSE SMOKE.



PRACTISING THE USE OF THE APPARATUS FOR RESTORING PERSONS OVERCOME WITH SMOKE.





TAKING HOSE UP A LADDER TO ATTACK A FIRE.

at headquarters, but all repairs to appliances and kit are carried out in the extensive workshops.

To drive a sixty horse-power fire engine at about forty miles an hour through London demands a skill and nerve above all reproach, and the men seen at the wheel of every appliance on its way to a London fire have each received an intensive instruction covering a period of nearly two years.

The hours of duty for the London fire-

men are split up into two watches, nine hours during the day, namely, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and fifteen hours during the night, namely, 6 p.m. to 9 a.m., alternate weeks of day and night duty being worked.

The men's amusements are well looked after, most stations having their billiard rooms, etc., but games are often interrupted, and when the alarm rings there is a rush for the engine room.

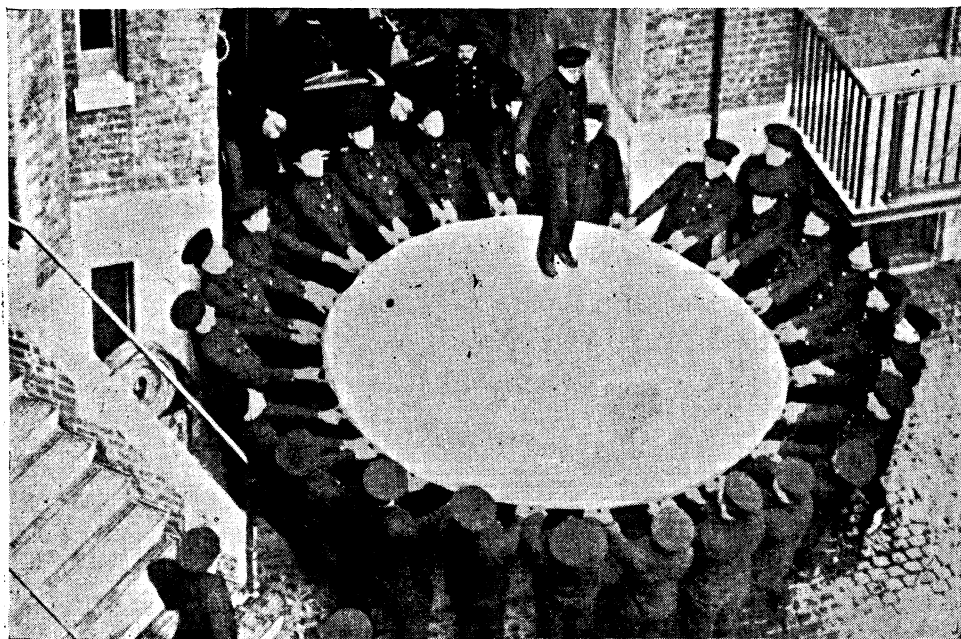
Many are the dangers, apart from actual



fire, with which the Brigade meets. Water poured upon rag and paper warehouses causes the contents to swell, and walls suddenly collapse, gas explosions take place, chemicals give off deadly fumes. Only a few days before this article was written a number of officers and men were partially blinded and otherwise incapacitated during a cardboard box factory fire. On the same day a tea warehouse fire caused the collapse of several firemen, but the Brigade "carried on" and gained a mastery and prevented extension of the flames. Still more recently two men were killed in North London by a falling wall. When the Hop

have to muster a big number of men and engines."

There is keen competition between the Northern and Southern Divisions for a Cup which is presented each year for the smartest "turn-out" to a test call. No man knows when the officer is going to make the test, and, so keen is the rivalry, that officers in the Northern Division turn out the Southern Division, and *vice versa*. The test call may be at dead of night or during daylight hours, but in any case there is the officer with stop-watch in hand. At the moment of writing the Cup is held by the B. Watch, Euston Road Station, for the



PRACTISING JUMPING FROM A HEIGHT INTO A SHEET AND THE WAY IN WHICH THOSE ON THE GROUND RECEIVE THE WEIGHT OF THE DESCENDING BODY.

Exchange was gutted, men descending into wine vaults below were overcome by the fumes, and were brought out chattering and laughing like men possessed, and took nearly an hour to recover their normality.

An officer said to me: "Many big fires would be avoided if people would call us at once instead of endeavouring to tackle an outbreak themselves. Many people think there is a charge for the attendance of the Brigade; there is no charge whatever, except in the case of chimney fires, whether three appliances or thirty are in attendance, and we would rather be called immediately and put out the fire than be called late and

best average for the past twelve months, viz., 16.47 seconds; while Eltham Road has the best individual time with 7 seconds. Think of it! The crew had to reach the appliances, don helmets, and be out on their way. There you have the reason of the few lives lost in fires and the comparatively low destruction of property in the area covered by the London County Council's Fire Brigade.

His Majesty the King has personally reviewed the Brigade and congratulated officers and men on their wonderful work. A number of them wear decorations received at His Majesty's hands; other



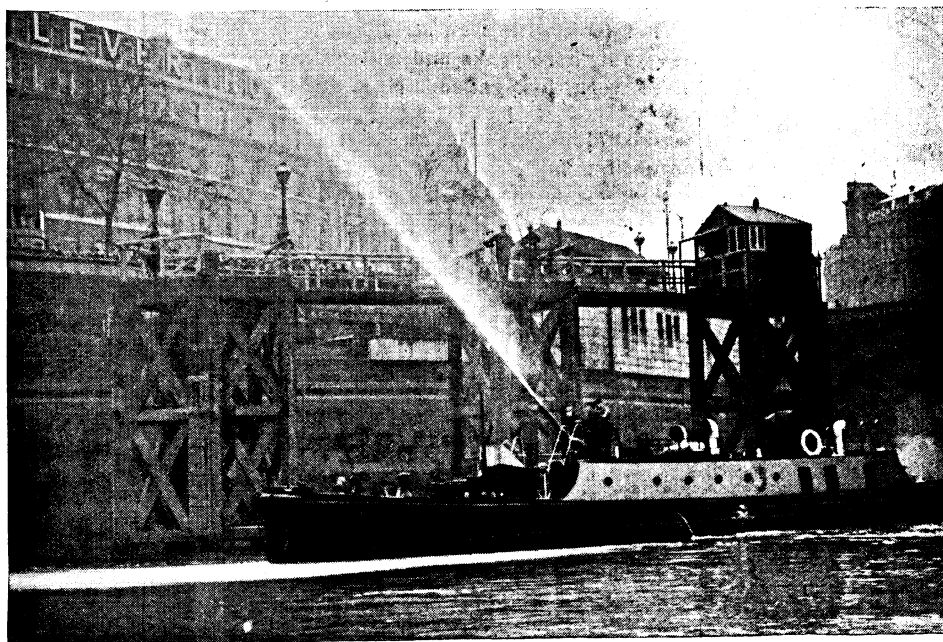
members of Royalty have expressed their appreciation, and visiting fire chiefs from America and abroad have voiced their admiration.

"Behind the scenes" the Chief Officer is ever engaged in an intricate number of inquiries as to, and experiments with, new fire-fighting appliances and up-to-date methods of subduing conflagrations, while the mass of questions relative to so large a body of men, to say nothing of the important and complex questions arising in connection with fire preventative work for London, with its vast and various fire risks, imposes upon him a concentration of thought and effort unrecognised by "the man in the street."

Such, then, is the story of the training of a body of men who, perhaps, more than any other body, carry their lives in their hands every minute they are on duty. A ringing of a bell, a challenging rush to a burning building, a rescue of a human being in peril, a falling wall, explosion, or deadly fumes, and the billiard player of a few minutes ago may either lie seriously injured or may have heroically gained the right to have his name inscribed upon the Roll of Honour at headquarters recording the deaths of former members of the Brigade. The battlefields have never produced more wonderful deeds



MR. ARTHUR R. DYERS, M.I.C.E., CHIEF OFFICER,  
LONDON FIRE BRIGADE.



ONE OF FOUR RIVER FLOATS USED FOR TACKLING THE BIG RIVERSIDE FIRES THAT OCCUR.



of heroism than have been performed by London firemen; nor than those which each and every member is prepared to undertake at any hour of the day or night.

The London County Council spends about £680,000 a year on its Fire Brigade, and never have ratepayers received such "good measure, pressed down." The advent of the motor has done away with the thrill of galloping horses and shouting men, but it has brought about a promptitude in effective attendance to fires—and this, notwithstanding a reduction of the number of fire stations—which is absolutely amazing, and Londoners owe a debt of gratitude to

their Fire Brigade and an ever-increasing admiration which should inspire every member of the public to assist, first, in giving prompt notice of an outbreak of fire, so that it may be tackled with greater ease and less likelihood of danger, and less expenditure of the Brigade's time; and, secondly, in the detection of those who give false alarms.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Chief Officer for facilities granted for the taking of photographs and the compilation of authentic figures and details, and also to the other officers at headquarters and elsewhere for their kind assistance.



## HARVEST.

**I WALKED** alone with a great wind  
That took with even stride  
The gaunt, bare peaks and sullen seas  
Where worn, lost galleons ride.

**I walked** alone with the forest trees,  
And oh, but my heart was sore!  
No solace stole to my aching soul  
As I trod the leaf-strewn floor.

**I walked** alone with the gleaming stars  
Staring with pitiless eyes,  
Heedless alike to my solitude  
As of falling dynasties.

**I walked** alone in the seething town,  
Sought till the long day's end  
'Mid a myriad faces, tense and hard,  
Yet found I ne'er a friend.

**I turned** again to my quiet room  
Where the brown bookshelves go round.  
There, where my old, tried friends stood still,  
That which I sought I found.

DONALD SMITH.



# A CHANGE OF HEART

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

WHEN it became generally known in Duncombe that a serious affliction had fallen upon Mr. Thomas Kent, the uncharitable said that it was a judgment. The charitable took the view of the minister that it was doubtless sent in mercy to bring about a change of heart.

Mr. Kent was not communicative. So no one knew exactly what the affliction was; but his housekeeper told everybody that he had been over to Bostly to see his cousin's doctor there—no doubt because a doctor out of the town couldn't run up a bill for visits!—and that his cousin's doctor had advised him to go and see a specialist in London.

"There's three people from here," she observed, shaking her head, "who've been sent up to specialists in my time.—Dr. Ardlow doesn't believe in it while there's any hope—and none of them lasted out a year afterwards. I make out it's something in the throat."

Mr. Kent kept the large stationer's shop and post office in the High Street, with a side of the shop and a private entrance in Railway Lane. He had been rather good-looking, as a young man, but he was a tall, thin, dried-up bachelor of fifty at this time. He had a ruddy young man to assist in the general business, and a young lady with fuzzy hair to look after the postal business—in both cases under his supervision, which was distinctly thorough. He was a capable and hard-working person. He spent his days in the shop, and his evenings going over the books, and did not enter into the social or civic life of the little town. People called him "a warm man" when they referred to his possessions, but when they referred to Thomas himself they called him

He was not really indifferent to other

people's troubles, only inattentive; but inattention has the same effect as indifference, and makes a man just as unpopular, which Mr. Kent certainly was.

At the time when his trouble came he was less popular even than usual, and there was a general opinion that a change of heart was called for.

To begin at home, he was unpopular with Mrs. Smith, his housekeeper. Mrs. Smith, who was a housewifely person, and looked upon the establishment as if it were her own, desired certain redecorations in the drawing-room, and in particular a new carpet. Mr. Kent considered it unnecessary to waste money upon a room which he scarcely ever used, and had often regretted furnishing. So Mrs. Smith was distinctly displeased with him.

In the shop he was unpopular with both assistants. The ruddy young man wanted a rise, so that he could save towards furnishing two rooms and marrying the fuzzy-haired girl. The fuzzy-haired girl wanted a rise with the same object. Mr. Kent had agreed to consider the young man's case after Christmas—which was within a month—but he had flatly refused the girl, unless and until she improved in her rendering of the multitudinous returns required by the Postal Authorities, which at present he frequently had to rewrite. She said that the returns were unnecessary. Mr. Kent said that, if they were, she would be. He took the occasion to observe that she was less punctual in arriving than in leaving. So she was displeased with him at first-hand, and the young man at second-hand.

Abroad he was only ordinarily unpopular with his fellow tradesmen in general, and only for the ordinary reasons. Reason 1: he did better than they (and deserved to, which aggravated his offence). Reason 2:



he bought his clothes and many other things in Town, instead of from his fellow-tradesmen.

He was, however, specially unpopular at the moment with Miss Stokes, who kept the toy shop. He was making a pre-Christmas display of some children's writing-cases and stencilling outfits, which were excellent value, and which competed with toys. Miss Stokes, and the town generally (except parents who thought the articles in question better than "breakable rubbish" for their youngsters) considered it particularly ungenerous of him to enter into competition with "one that he was engaged to once upon a time." "The once upon a time" was a quarter of a century before, and it was principally Miss Stokes who had made the quarrel, and who had refused to make it up, or to be on speaking terms ever after (even at public functions). But as she was quite popular—a very kindly woman, although she had a temper, and quite attractive for one in the later 'forties—Duncombe held that "she must have had strong cause to keep it up all these years. Such a good soul as she is!"

Miss Stokes *was* a good soul, if a somewhat turbulent one. She said (very truthfully) that she was extremely sorry to hear of Tom Kent's trouble. She even stopped him in the street to express the hope that it would turn out to be nothing much. Kent thanked her, and said that he hoped so, too. He did not give her any particulars of the malady, though she fished for them. He evidently disliked facing his ailment in words. He passed the time of day whenever they met afterwards, but he told himself that "Mary" thought perhaps he'd leave her a legacy. "She seemed to be holding something back while she talked," he reflected.

She was; but it was the fear that his affliction had been sent as a punishment for selling writing-cases and stencilling outfits. The latter were a novelty in Duncombe, and were selling briskly in lieu of toys.

Naturally Kent was unusually unpopular with the doctor at the moment, having gone to one out of the town. He was always unpopular with the lawyer, as he managed his business without litigation or legal assistance. He was also unpopular with the Minister because he had refused to subscribe to the restoration fund. He gave the reason that he never attended the church, which, the Minister told people, only aggravated the offence.

"But," he said, with a very honest desire to be Christianly charitable, "his affliction will bring a change of heart. I have never regarded him as beyond hope. He subscribes to the Benevolent Fund and things of that kind, and he was quite generous when we sent poor Smithers to Switzerland. You may be sure that whatever has come upon him is for the best."

Everybody agreed that the trouble must be sent for Kent's good, and was intended to soften his heart, but some doubted whether it would.

"He's a stubborn man," Mrs. Pond, the grocer's stout and kindly wife, told Miss Stokes. "Look how he wouldn't speak to you all those years!"

"It was a good deal my fault," Miss Stokes declared. She wiped her eyes. Miss Stokes's heart was readily softened by trouble of other people. "He wasn't a bad boy, if you took him the right way. Obstinate as a mule, but that isn't all a fault, or peculiar to him. Look at me! Of course an old bachelor is bound to get to think he's all the universe, and other people don't matter. If I'd married him, perhaps he'd have been different. I'm afraid he knows that it's something very bad, Mrs. Pond, but I didn't get a word out of him as to what the doctor said. He was always one to keep things to himself. That was partly what aggravated me. Poor old Tom! I shan't be able to help worrying about it to-morrow. That's when he goes to London and sees the doctor, Mrs. Smith says. *He* never opened his mouth about it. He's coming back in the evening by the seven-thirty-eight; and he's ordered a veal cutlet and fried potatoes, just as if nothing was happening!"

"I can't think how people have the nerve to go to a specialist and hear the worst," Mrs. Pond observed. "It's killed many before their time. They're all for the knife. Ordered his dinner just as usual when he comes back, poor man, and won't say a word to anybody, I suppose; but we'll soon hear through Mrs. Smith."

"She says she doesn't believe he'll tell her even," Miss Stokes complained. "He's that close!"

"Anyhow," Mrs. Pond comforted her, "we shall soon tell. If he begins to put his house in order and live better, we shall know what it's a sign of. People seem to think they can pay off fifty years' debts in a few months at the end, but they can't. As I say to Pond, when he wants to give one



of the boys what he deserves, 'A child that behaves for fear of a whipping isn't good, only careful. You'll do more with him by giving him a good jawing and letting him off.' Which I'd say to a Power I ain't fit to talk to, if I had any voice about Kent."

"I shouldn't call him a bad living man," Miss Stokes protested. "He's very upright. I don't call to mind his doing anything really wrong, except over those writing-cases and stencil outfits. The pounds he must have made out of them; and won't be able to take with him!"

She wiped her eyes again.

"What worries me," she observed, "is that I said I hoped a judgment would fall on him for it."

"It won't have come about through that," Mrs. Pond declared. "The Almighty wouldn't be taken in by what a woman said in a temper. Why, even Pond isn't!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Several people strolled into the railway station just before the seven-thirty-eight was due, thinking to judge from Mr. Kent's manner what luck he had had with the specialist, and how he took it. Miss Stokes walked up and down the High Street on the opposite side to "Kent's." She meant to post herself between the lamps on that side when he drew near—it was early closing day, so the street was fairly dark—and scrutinise his face as he passed under the lamp as he came down Railway Lane to his side entrance.

"If he's upset," she told herself, "I'll have hard work to stop myself from running over to him; and wouldn't try to stop myself, if it weren't that he might think I was looking out for a legacy."

However, none of the watchers saw Mr. Kent return. He had arrived by the five-fifteen, gone straight home, and let himself in at the side-door with his key. Those who happened to see him reported that he looked "dreadful set." Mrs. Smith declared that he "looked awful" when he came in. "Never spoke a word, and didn't seem to know that he was eating his dinner; and afterwards got out his private account-book and figured on slips of paper, reckoning up what he had to leave, I suppose. I worked up my courage to ask him how things had gone; but he just stared at me, and I thought the less said the better. Plain enough how it is. Them that are sent to those special doctors never do get better. I will say that he hasn't treated me bad, and might remember me when he's

disposing of what won't be no more use to him."

The suspicion that the specialist had sentenced Thomas Kent grew to assurance the next day. He showed a doomed man's change of heart—or his bargaining with Providence—in his actions.

When Mrs. Smith cleared away the breakfast things he stood with his back to the fire and smiled at her, "If you'll believe me," she reported, "he actually smiled!"

"Well, Mrs. Smith," he said, "you shall have your way about the new carpet for the drawing-room and some of those other little things. Make out a list, and we'll go over it together. It won't make much difference to me, but you like to see the place looking nice."

"Mark his words," she said. "It wouldn't make much difference to *him*. He knows he hasn't long. About three months I should guess. He spoke of going into the drawing-room about once a quarter! That's what gives me the idea. Well, if he's going, I'm glad he's going with a changed heart, to give him a better chance afterwards. After this I'd have nothing to say against him, if it rested with me. He's promised that I shall choose the carpet."

He showed a change of heart in the shop also. When his ruddy male assistant arrived, five minutes before time, as usual, Mr. Kent spoke pleasantly to him.

"I appreciate the way you put your back into the business, Dixon," he said. "That is a great merit; and if you learn to appreciate the quality of things, and to gauge their selling chances better, you ought to get on. You'll have a shop of your own some day; perhaps this. I shan't last for ever—shan't last for ever. . . . Now about that rise. I thought of giving you seven-and-six a week more in the New Year; but, in view of your industry, I'll make it ten shillings. You'll be able to get married then, eh? It seems to me, however, that what you most need is assistance in making a fair start. Well, I'll give you thirty pounds towards your furniture, for a wedding present. You are wise to get married. Young people may as well have a good time while they're young. We must make the most of time while we have it. Some of us haven't too much."

"Some of us haven't too much," Dixon quoted to a friend. "That's what he said, and looked away from me out of the door. The poor old governor! Myself, I always rather liked him. Whatever else he is or



isn't, he's a worker, and I like that. I'm one myself. I suppose that's why I like it in other people."

The fuzzy-haired young lady was five minutes late (as usual). She found her employer getting out the stamps. She began to explain volubly that her alarm clock was wrong, and that a shoe-lace broke, and that but for such disasters she would have been quite early. Mr. Kent seemed to remember having heard similar explanations before.

"Ah!" he said. "The fact is you are better suited for home life than for business, Miss Brown. I——"

"Oh, Mr. Kent," she wailed, "do look over it this time! Jack and I have such a job to save up enough for—for home life—and if you fire me——"

"I'm not going to," he told her. "You talk to Jack about what I've been saying to him on the subject. I understand that when you are married, you aren't going out, but mean to give music lessons at home, eh?"

"If we can hire a piano, sir," she said. "I'll see to the stamps now. Don't you bother."

"You've rather mixed up the denomination, you know," he observed. "I don't think you're meant for business, my girl, but—— If I'd married, I might have had a girl your age. I dare say *her* mind would have been on other things. Well, I shall never have one now. You have always been very pleasant while you have been here, even if—never mind about that. For a wedding present I think of giving you a piano. That's apart from what I am going to do for Jack."

"It's the way he looked when he said 'I shall never have one now' that I can't get

over," Miss Brown told her mother. "It's plain enough that he knows he hasn't long. I shall set the alarm ten minutes earlier in future, and go over the returns twice before I give them to him. He shan't have any more queries to fuss over in his time."

"It's almost a pity that he's going," her mother observed, "now he's taken this



turn! Giving you a piano! He must know that the end is coming quick!"

During the day Mr. Kent went to Lake, the tailor's, and ordered an overcoat. He stated that the great doctor whom he had consulted had advised him to take more care of himself, and so he'd better have a fur collar, as his throat was rather more sensitive to cold than it used to be. He also remarked that he ought to deal with his neighbours rather than in Town.

"I feel, Lake," he said, "that I have



lived too selfish a life, and must do better with what is left."

"I wasn't cruel enough to ask how long the doctor gave him," Lake said at the club, "but I'd say he expects to last some way into the winter, from his buying an overcoat

He sighed.

The minister was very jubilant that Kent



"There was something I wanted to say to you," She glanced round at the young man and young woman doubtfully. "Something rather personal."

But perhaps he thinks it doesn't matter what he spends, as there's more than enough to last his days. Well, he's a changed man, and I'd say it was genuine enough; but I doubt if it's come in time to give him much credit."

gave him ten pounds, instead of his usual two pounds, towards the Benevolent Fund, which was in process of collection for Christmas; but he was also rather sad about it.

"I don't know if he's really repentant.



or trying to bribe his Judge," he said. "It can't be done—can't be done. I do hope it's a genuine repentance—well, I won't say repentance. Who am I to call another a sinner? The man hasn't *done* anything. It's what he *hasn't* done—till late. He spoke as if he mightn't be here this time next year. He tried to turn it off, as if he'd been speaking of going out to some friends in Canada; can't face the matter, poor fellow. Well, well! He spoke quite sympathetically about the poor. I trust that it's a genuine change. But he shook his head when I mentioned the restoration fund! He said that he didn't belong to my flock. I said 'There is a Shepherd who has many flocks, Kent. You are helping His poor. God bless you!' I'm afraid that his giving so much is a serious sign."

Another sign, which Duncombe regarded as serious, was that Mr. Kent took to stopping and talking to people whom he met, instead of passing them by with a nod.

"He spoke to me for ten minutes," Mrs. Pond told Miss Stokes; "ten minutes and not a second less, by the market clock. 'You're growing sociable in your old age, Mr. Kent,' I says; 'not that I'd go for to call you old yet.' 'Ah,' he says, 'I've looked death in the face lately, Mrs. Pond!'"

"Oh!" Miss Stokes cried. "Oh! Oh! He's nothing to me now, of course, but—You think of what might have been—and to think of what trouble he's in—"

"Don't cry, my dear, don't cry!" Mrs. Pond entreated. "I know how you feel. A woman always has a thought for her first. A well-looking young fellow Tom Kent was in those days."

"Don't!" Miss Stoke begged. "Don't! What else did the poor fellow say?"

"'And,' he says; 'it's been a warning to me to do my best with what time's left; and that, Mrs. Pond, seems to me to be doing what you can for other people. At least you can give them a neighbourly word,' he says, 'and there's many a kind word I might have spoken and haven't.' And then he sighed—deep—"

"Oh!" Miss Stokes choked again. "Oh! Poor old Tom!"

"Ah," said Mrs. Pond, "poor he is, for all his money; which I wish Pond and me had. Lonely he is, and frightened to be left with his thoughts. That's why he's taken to talking to people. I shall tell Pond to ask him round one evening, though it's hard to know how to entertain a man that's

turning his thoughts away from this world. Cards and all that must seem foolishness to him. But I'll give him a roast fowl for his supper. Evening's when he must feel it most. All alone in that barn of a house. No wife, no—my dear, it's no use upsetting yourself like that."

"I know it's no use," Miss Stokes sobbed. "but I can't help it. I have been wondering whether I should go and tell him how sorry I am. He might be glad of a little sympathy even from me."

"What!" cried Mrs. Pond. "You'd go and call on him! After all you've said —"

"I wish I hadn't now," Miss Stokes mourned. "I dare say it was my fault as well as his."

"Oh, that!" Mrs. Pond sniffed. "I don't see that you need trouble about a quarrel a quarter of a century old, or care what people said. They *would* talk if you called on him, but if you regulate your life by what other people say, it's them and not you living it, and—"

"I should go to the shop," Miss Stokes interrupted; "and surely to goodness my character can take care of itself at my age. I wasn't thinking so much of what happened years ago, or my bearing malice so long. There I was wrong, and no doubt it's gone down against me. I was thinking of what I said about his selling those writing cases and stencilling sets. Mind you, I was a fool not to go in for them, and it served me right in a way; but he'd no business to do it, and I'd say that if it was my last word."

"And everybody would agree with you," Mrs. Pond asserted; "and not wonder that you spoke your mind about it to your friends. This day fortnight—I remember the day, because it was young Alf's birthday—you said you hoped a judgment would fall on him for it, and—"

"Don't remind me!" Miss Stokes cried. "It's the very thing that's always on my mind. It seems as if I'd called vengeance down on him. Not that I think bad prayers are heard, or that the Lord would mistake my idle words and suppose that I wished any real harm to the man. What I feel, Emma, is this—that I had a hard, obstinate bitter feeling towards him for five-and-twenty years, and over this last affair went so far as to bear him malice; and that he wasn't the only one that needed a change of heart. . . . I don't suppose I can do him any good by sympathy, but I shall go to the shop. It will be the first time since



our disagreement. I've always sent for anything I wanted, even a postage stamp. But I'll lower myself that much; and if he's pleasant to me, I'll tell him that I've come just to say I'm sorry to hear a bad account of him, and can I do anything of service. When he gets bad enough to need nursing—well, I don't believe in sympathy that isn't backed by help—he's only to say the word, and I'll go in."

Miss Stokes entered Mr. Kent's shop very much as if she were entering the dentist's. She had rather a high colour, because she knew that she was observed, and that the news that she had descended from her pedestal and gone to make a purchase at her enemy's would be all over Duncombe before nightfall. She decided that she hadn't the courage to ask for Mr. Kent, after all. She would buy some envelopes and go out again, unless he spoke to her. So she advanced upon the ruddy assistant, who gasped at her as if she were an apparition. But Mr. Kent came at once and waved the young man aside.

"I will serve Miss Stokes," he said, bowing deferentially. "I am very pleased to see you here," he told her. "I can't treat your visit entirely as a matter of business."

"I didn't really come for paper and things," she stated rather huskily. "There was something I wanted to say to you." She glanced round at the young man and young woman doubtfully. "Something rather personal."

"I wonder," Mr. Kent said, "if you would come into my office."

"Your what?" she inquired. The little Duncombe shops did not have "offices," and she feared that he was trying to "swank."

"It's the shop parlour," he owned, "but I use it as an office." He ushered her in. "Let me make you a cup of tea," he begged. "The kettle's on the boil. I'll put in some more tea. Take the armchair. I know what you have come to speak about, of course. I knew directly you entered the door. As a matter of fact, I was trying to write to you upon the subject."

"Oh," Miss Stokes cried, "I am glad of that—very glad of that!"

"There are two letters in halves in the waste-paper basket," he said, shaking his head at himself. "It was, of course, a rather painful subject, and of course there has long been an estrangement between us;

but I thought, perhaps, if I told you how I felt——"

"I know how you must," Miss Stokes said. She wiped her eyes.

"Well," he continued, "the long and short of it is this. I have, I fear, been a very self-centred man, but I have never set out to injure others. When I bought those letter cases and stencil sets——"

"Letter cases," Miss Stokes almost screamed, "and stencil sets! You don't think——"

"Let me finish, please," he begged. "Speaking in all honesty, when I ordered them I thought only of my own business. I did not realise that I should be injuring yours. If you like to take over the remainder at net cost—I got them very cheap—you are welcome. I could also put you on to a line of filled pencil-cases that——"

"Thomas Kent," Miss Stokes cried, "do you think I came about pencil-cases? That when you were in sorrow and trouble I came huckstering about toys—well, you call them 'stationery,' I suppose!" She sniffed. "You misjudge me, as you always—never mind about that! I came to offer my sympathy, and to say that if there was anything that I could do to help you in your illness—if you got worse, and you needed nursing . . . How long did the specialist give you, Tom, old friend?"

She put her hand on his arm.

Mr. Kent stared and stared.

"About thirty years!" he said. "That is to say, if I was careful over diet and took exercise. There wasn't anything in my throat. It was only gout!"

Miss Stokes tried to rise, but staggered back into the chair.

"Then why," she gasped, "have you altered like this? I'm not the only one you've made a fool of. Everyone in the town says that the doctor gave you up, and you've had a change of heart."

"I have," he said. "I thought I was done for, Mary—Miss Stokes. When he put that little mirror on his forehead and shone the light down my throat and looked. . . Well, he didn't keep me in suspense long. 'There's no growth,' he told me. 'It's only gout. You're good for, say, thirty years!'"

"When I came out of the specialist's house with a new life given me—it seemed like that—I—I don't know quite what I did—wandered about, I suppose. However, I found myself watching the fountains playing in Trafalgar Square, like a child born afresh, for thirty years. And I said



to myself, 'I'll do better with this life.' And how was I to do it, I wondered? I looked at the people passing by, and I thought that lots of them were in trouble, if I knew. And because I'd been helped out of mine, I wanted to know how to help them. I did know people's troubles *here*, I thought; *could* know them, if I tried to, anyhow. So I came home to live my second life where I'd lived the first. Well, that's how I looked at it. I'd written off the first in my mind, like I write off bad debts in my books."

"You always were methodical," Miss Stokes murmured. "I remember—it doesn't matter. You were saying——"

"So I entered it up in my mind—as I should in my books—as a new life given to me. Thank God!"

"Thank God!" Miss Stokes said. "But you'd no business to let people think that you were dying and worry about you. More fools they!"

She rose as if to go, but he got in the way, held to her arm.

"At the beginning of my new life," he said, "you come to me, thinking that I need your help, and—won't you shake hands, Mary? Thank you. The greatest mistake in my old life, Mary, was that I let you drop out of it. I've never found anyone else, or you——"

"You have struck off the old life," Miss Stokes observed. She had rather a high colour; poked at her collar with her forefinger. "So you can't alter it."

"I have entered up the new," he said. "Can't I put your name underneath mine?"

"Underneath, indeed!" cried Miss Stokes. "You'll soon see!"

\* \* \* \* \*

"How you two will get on," Mrs. Pond observed, "I don't know, being both set in your ways, and I should say set hard! Granted that he's had trouble to change his heart. You haven't."

"Your heart is changed by other people's troubles," Miss Stokes said, "as well as by your own."



## THE HOUSE OF DREAMS.

**W**HAT if my outer world be grey,  
 Dreary my course of everyday?  
 The house of dreams beyond compare  
 Stands rich with splendid colour rare:  
 The secret kingdom of my dreams  
 For ever glows; and in its gleams  
 There hides a glamour none else knows—  
 Whiteness of swan's breast and of snows,  
 Scarlet of poppy, green of sea,  
 The cloudless blue chalcedony  
 Unshadowed of summer sky,  
 Sword blades of sunlight ever nigh.

There, in that place remote, is found  
 Such peace as makes it holy ground.  
 Only in life who hold the key  
 Of dreams may enter in with me.

EDITH DART.





"He straightened himself, the syringe clenched between his fingers and the cold sweat damp upon his forehead. Murder! Was it murder?"

# A WOMAN WAITING

By J. S. BETTLE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. R. SKELTON

"GOOD morning, Sister!" The young doctor's voice was blithe as he stepped lightly on the verandah of the little East African hospital. "Where's the patient, and what is wrong? By Jove, it's a topping morning, though!" he added. "Makes one glad to be alive, even in East Africa. Just look at that!" And he waved his hand towards the east, where the whole sky shone crimson and gold in the glory of the sunrise, till the heavy dewdrops on the trees glittered like diamonds in the radiance of the dawn.

But the sister was in no mood for poetry. "It's blackwater," she said quietly. "A bad case. His boys carried him in just now, and I sent for you at once." As she spoke

she moved towards the door, and the doctor, falling in with her professional mood, followed into the spotless little ward with its double row of neat white beds, all unoccupied save one.

A glance at the occupant of that sufficed to tell a much less practised eye that the man lay in the Shadow. Unconscious, breathing heavily, his face bore the unmistakable sign of death. Days of neglect had produced a stubble of untidy hair on his chin, but despite his pallor and his sunken cheeks he was not old nor bad-looking. Quickly the doctor examined him, putting a few brief questions to the girl—for she seemed little more—and at last he looked up.

"I'm afraid it's hopeless," he said



gravely. "There might have been a chance if we had got him at once, but he has probably been carried miles in a *machila*. We can't do much. It's a question of nursing and luck, but I think it's too late."

The girl's face went white. "I thought so," she said, and her voice shook a little, so that the doctor, unaccustomed to any display of feeling on duty, looked at her curiously. "I'll do all I can," she went on quickly. "Perhaps we can save him even now."

The doctor shook his head. "I doubt it. But you can do more than I in a case like this. I wonder who he is," he went on thoughtfully. "Any white man come in with him?"

"No, only his native boys. But he is a Mr. Sibball—Jack Sibball, a hunter from up-country—and I don't think anyone here knows him."

The doctor looked a question, and the girl bent forward to rearrange the coverlet over the unconscious man, so that her flowing veil hid her face. "I knew him long ago," she added softly, "years ago."

They scarcely spoke again until they stood on the verandah. The patient had been made comfortable, and the sister had her instructions. Outside the sun had climbed clear of his golden bed, and his rays were slowly dissipating the mists that still clung to the foot of the hills. The hospital stood high, and below they could see for miles across tangled bush and open plain to where the waters of Lake Shirwa glistened silver in the distance. A climbing rose bloomed by the fence, and the doctor, pausing, absently broke off a bloom, twirling it in his fingers.

He studied the girl covertly as she stood there, efficient and capable-looking in her neat uniform, yet undeniably beautiful; tall, well-built, with deep brown eyes that held unplumbed depths of mystery. Little locks of fair hair showed coquettishly beneath her snowy cap, whilst her cheeks, that had not yet lost their English colour, were, he thought, brighter than ever this morning. A sudden spasm of jealousy smote him, and his voice was brusque as he spoke.

"Did you know this man well, Sister?"

The colour flamed higher in her face, but she answered evenly: "Quite well."

Dr. Allerton lingered, but, seeing that she was not inclined to be communicative, he turned away at last. "I'll be up again at ten," he said, and added, "You'll be busy

with this case. And you are alone till Sister Davis comes back. If you like, I'll take the night duty for you."

"Thank you," said the girl quietly, "but I'll manage all right."

The young doctor turned thoughtfully to descend the steps, and at the roadside he paused and looked back. But the sister had already gone inside, and the verandah was empty. Quite suddenly he became aware that he was still twirling the rose between his fingers.

He dropped it on the ground as he strode away.

During the next three days the little hospital was the scene of wonderful devotion. Doctor and nurse alike battled desperately with the grisly spectre that hovered over the corner cot, but despite their efforts the patient slowly sank. Still unconscious, he lay as one already dead. "A breathing corpse," the doctor aptly described him.

Their work necessarily brought them in close contact, but the girl hedged herself with a reserve that forbade intrusion. She was efficiency personified, deft, quick, with the technique of her profession at her finger-tips, till the doctor found himself marvelling at her ability and self-sacrifice, even though he chafed at the distance she deliberately kept between them. His efforts to break down the barrier were invariably defeated, and she skilfully maintained things on a purely professional level, till the man, already hopelessly in love, grew frankly despondent and even found himself experiencing a queer unreasoning jealousy of the unconscious patient to whom the girl ministered so gently.

Used as he was to the capable methods of the best type of nurse, he could not help noticing in this one a fund of silent sympathy that went beyond the customary kindness of her profession. His eyes, sharpened by love, observed a hundred ways in which she showed a consideration that was almost tenderness for the helpless log of a man that lay in the corner bed, his soul creeping speechlessly, step by step, to the edge of the abyss that is death.

Dr. Allerton had welcomed the opportunity that this patient's arrival would give him of seeing more of the girl who had so entirely fascinated him since her arrival three months before. He had fallen an immediate and willing victim to her charm and beauty, rare enough in East Africa, and had deliberately set out to win her. But she had treated him—as she treated all the



other lonely bachelors of the station who worshipped frankly at her shrine—with friendly courtesy and nothing more. Not a word, not an action that he could remember, had she ever said or done on which his hungry soul could seize for encouragement.

And he knew that his was no mere fascination induced by the presence of a pretty face in a barren land. It went deeper than that, down to the very heart of his being, till it enveloped his whole existence in its amazing glamour. He loved, but he was not loved, and the thought drove him to distraction, till the whole station was talking of his obvious passion for the new nurse, and deriving much delightful scandal from the subject. For scandal is the breath of life in a lonely community on the frontier of the Empire.

If he realised that he was being discussed, Dr. Allerton gave no sign, but pursued his unfavoured wooing with a quiet determination that was characteristic of him. His progress seemed infinitesimal, but, seeing that she was not the type to be won by storm methods, he set himself to gain her friendship and her confidence in the hope that both might deepen into a love that had come to mean more to him than he dared to realise.

But the girl held him always at arm's length, and he had almost come to believe that her nature was naturally cold, when he saw it roused to perfect tenderness by a helpless bush wanderer. If he had loved before, the doctor experienced a fresh passion as he noted the girl's unceasing devotion to this poor piece of jetsam from the black sea of failure that beats on an African shore. He saw the glory of her calm eyes as she washed and ministered to the dying man, saw a depth and a light in them that he longed to raise for himself, noted her gentleness of voice and manner, and at last, because of the girl, he threw himself with a fervour that surprised him into the battle for the man's life, worthless though he believed it to be.

Inquiry had told him that little enough was known about this Jack Sibball, except that he was a hunter, hard up, one who came and went as the fancy took him. "A gentleman," they said, "but down and out. Seems a decent enough chap, but you never know. Most likely a waster whose people are glad enough to have him out of the way. The East is full of them."

And for this wreck of humanity doctor

and nurse toiled unceasingly day and night. The girl grew thinner, and little blue shadows showed beneath her eyes. Her voice was tired and her step heavier. In vain Allerton urged more rest. "I'm quite all right," she answered with a smile. "Don't worry about me."

They had sent for help, but distance was against them, and it would be a week at least before an incoming Lake steamer could bring relief. And at last there came a night when the patient lay in the very arms of the great Reaper. To their practised eyes it was the end, and only the man's magnificent constitution kept him living. It was very still in the little ward as they watched together, knowing that all had been done that human skill could do, and that the issue rested in greater hands than theirs. The man lay very quiet, a curious blue colour on his face, whilst little beads of moisture gathered continually on his brow. Occasionally the girl stooped and wiped them off, only to see them reappear at once. They faced each other across the bed, both worn and tired, loath to confess defeat, but seeing it plain enough in the still form between them.

Outside a cricket shrilled unceasingly, and from somewhere in the darkness a chorus of bull-frogs croaked in raucous melody. An owl hooted sombrely, and as their eyes met, the doctor spoke.

"We can't do any more, Sister. It's all over." He rose wearily from his chair and walked quietly round to where the girl sat. "We've done our best, you know," he said. "No one can do more than that."

The nurse looked up, and suddenly he became aware that she was crying silently. Two great tears trickled unheeded down her cheeks, and the man suppressed a wild desire to hold her to him and comfort her. He looked away, fighting with that dangerous impulse, and conscious again of an unreasoning resentment against the helpless man in bed for causing her even an instant's sorrow.

She was speaking now, her voice very low. "I know," she was saying. "You have been very kind."

"I?" The doctor turned. "Why, it is you that have done everything. You've been—a brick." His tongue halted over the words.

And quite suddenly the girl broke down. Overwrought nerves and wearied body alike gave way in a flood of tears that shook her helplessly, and in a moment, the doctor



slipped his arm round her shoulders, murmuring incoherent words of comfort, his whole body trembling at the touch of her.

"You're dead beat," he was saying. "Dead beat. You must have some rest."

But she drew away from his encircling arm and stood up. "I'm a fool," she said

let him go. I thought I could do without him, and I tried—hard. Then I found that I couldn't, so I came here, too, hoping to come across him. You see, I didn't even know his address. I only knew he was in East Africa. But I always felt that I should find him . . . and I have . . . like this!"



"The Doctor had sunk into a chair, his head resting on his hands, and he did not even look up."

unsteadily. "I'll be all right in a minute. I'm sorry."

The doctor faced her gravely, and outside the owl hooted again. "Sister," he said, and there was that in his voice that forbade prevarication, "you must have seen a number of men die. Why has this one affected you like this?"

The girl turned to the patient so that her face was hidden. Very softly she wiped the sweat from the dying man's forehead, and her voice was scarcely audible as she whispered—

"I love him. I loved him long ago, but I was—foolish. We quarrelled. I thought he was to blame. And he came out here. I

She checked a sob, and very tenderly the doctor touched her shoulder. When he spoke his voice was harsh, but his eyes were gentle.

"Now you must go and get some rest. I insist. I will stay here; and we can do nothing more. Perhaps another injection of digitalin—and I can give that, but it's only a forlorn hope at best. Now go."

She looked up in quick protest, but his manner told her that he meant to be obeyed, and reluctantly she yielded.

"Promise me," she said, "that you will call me, if—"

Her voice broke, but the doctor appeared not to notice.

"I will call you at once," he said steadily.



"But I insist on your going to lie down now."

The girl glanced once at the sick man, and then very slowly she moved down the ward till her white frock disappeared from the circle of light around the bed. At the door she stopped and looked back, but the doctor had sunk into a chair, his head resting

struck the doctor oddly, and he leaned forward a little, staring curiously into the pallid face on the pillow, wondering wherein lay the charm that had won this woman so completely, held her captive through the years, and brought her at last so many thousand miles.



"The girl glanced once at the sick man, and then very slowly she moved down the ward till her white frock disappeared from the circle of light around the bed. At the door she stopped and looked back."

on his hands, and he did not even look up.

For long he sat there in the intense stillness, quiet almost as the man in the bed, both waiting—the one for Eternity and the other for a girl's forgetfulness. The thought

The still face gave no clue. The doctor saw only a man of almost forty, unshaven, blue with the hue of death, rigid, deeply lined across the brow and beneath the closed eyelids. Impassive, corpse-like, what had such a face to do with life and love and



laughter? Surely, if it stood for anything at all, it stood for forgetfulness, weariness, and death.

And yet this calm, contemptuous face could still bring tears to her eyes, still wring her heart with anguish, and he, alive, young, passionate, could not evoke a single answering chord. It was unfair and cruel, and he felt that he hated this unseeing mask, this stranger slipping over the edge of life, going without even knowing that she had come at last to seek him, careless of farewells.

"If I were as bad as you," the doctor muttered almost angrily to the unconscious form, "I should know if she came to me. But you—you left her before, and now you're leaving her again. But this time, old man, she will not find you."

He stopped, surprised at the sound of his own voice as it died away in an eerie echo down the dark room. Rising, he walked to the door, moving quietly, with the feeling that death was hovering somewhere there outside. The night air was fresh and cool, and overhead the glorious African stars hung in myriad radiance. A speck of white on the verandah showed where Malela, the night orderly, slept at his post, and for a minute the doctor watched, his mind busy with a thousand fancies.

Then resolutely he turned back to where the bed stood in the centre of a circle of light. The man had not stirred, but a quick examination showed that the reluctant spirit had not flown. It was as though it lingered, unwilling on the threshold, as one hesitates on the door of a once-loved but empty house, loath to leave for ever a spot where one has known both joy and sorrow. Again the doctor spoke, almost to himself.

"It's time you passed out, old man," he said. "You must have had wonderful strength to last so long." And he sat again to resume his watch. A phrase that he had read somewhere sprang to his mind. "At each of the gates of Life stands a woman, waiting." True enough, for was not one waiting even as this poor exile shambled through the exit, unkempt and broken?

"At each of the gates of Life . . ." And at the other, too, a woman had once watched for his coming, and welcomed him with joy. They said he had been a gentleman—it was not difficult, then, to imagine that gentle mother who had waited by the entrance. The doctor wondered where she was. Dead long ago, probably, perhaps waiting again to welcome her son as he crept, a failure, from the world. She would forgive him, and

this other that he was leaving, she had forgiven, too. The love of women, selfless, enduring, mother, wife, or lover, it was all the same.

The time passed slowly. A single star, sinking to the west, shone clear through the blackness of the window, and still the doctor sat on, dreaming, watching. He thought of the girl, praying, probably, in her room, for he knew she would not sleep, tired as she was, until this watch was over. He thought of her beauty and her sweetness, of her soft brown eyes, bright with tears, of her gentle tenderness, and again he addressed the silent figure on the bed.

"You fool," he said, "you utter fool!"

And he thought of what this man's death might mean for him, till the realisation of it made him catch his breath sharply. The girl was not old. She would forget in time, and surely his love must win at last. He would be patient and wait, years if need be. Unobtrusively, quietly he would show her the value of the love that he could give her. He would take her away, teach her to forget, surround her with happiness and comfort, till the picture of this poor wanderer faded from her heart, and she gave to him the glorious gift of the love for which he yearned.

Roseate visions leaped into his brain, so that at last he turned almost eagerly to see whether the thin thread that alone stood between him and happiness had snapped. It held, by some queer miracle of nature, still hung obstinately across his path, as though the man knew what his going meant, and fought tenaciously to stay. The lips were drawn back almost in a snarl, and the doctor hated him as he studied the sunken face.

With a sigh he turned his head again and, sitting back, allowed imagination to claim him. He saw himself the husband of this girl, devoted, tender, he saw her brown eyes light up as they met his own, felt her hand close on his, heard her voice linger over his name. He even caught himself breathing hers, "Faith," for he had learnt it long ago.

Again he sighed, and then sat upright, every nerve tense, for his sigh had drawn an echo from the dying man. Quickly the doctor bent over him, sure that this was the end, but his sensitive fingers on the other's pulse brought a different message, so that he sat as though turned to stone, listening, counting.

The next instant he stood upright, professional instinct driving him to rapid action.



There was just a fighting chance. It was amazing, miraculous, but there was a chance. With flying fingers he prepared an injection, hate and love alike forgotten in the need of the moment. What had he said? "Only a forlorn hope," but still a hope.

A minute—less, and the little syringe was full, and he had bared the other's arm, was bending over him. And then he paused. For one vivid moment he saw the possible consequences of his action clear before him, saw the empty years that stretched ahead if this man lived, saw the heartache and the loneliness.

It would be so easy. Not a soul would ever know. The man was as good as dead, and all that was necessary was to withhold the injection. No one could really blame him, even if they knew, for it was only a chance in a thousand—a forlorn hope indeed. A few more minutes, just a tiny space of time, and the chance would have gone, the last flicker died away, and he would be free to win the girl and to make her happy. It would be for the best, too, for what could this man give her? And he would see that she lacked for nothing.

He straightened himself, the syringe clenched between his fingers, and the cold sweat damp upon his forehead. Murder! Was it murder? Not that. You could not murder a man already dead. He was fighting for happiness, and surely all was fair in love and war.

"My God!" said the doctor. "Oh, my God!"

He stared at the other's face, still impassive, still with that half sneer on his lips. A breathing corpse, wanting only a shroud, and yet the tiny glass phial in his hand held that which might make this a man again—a man able to live, and to love to take away all that spelt happiness, and to repay his care by breaking his heart.

The irony of it—to have to choose between giving this man the chance of life and thereby deliberately wrecking his own, or to withhold the chance and so make sure. He was the arbiter of Destiny, and Fate had left the dice for him to turn, to throw them as he willed.

It was all so terribly easy. Only a minute or two more and it would be over. A minute or two, and the choice of life or death to make. The agony of it! Very suddenly the doctor laid down the little syringe on the table by the bedside and dropped back into his chair, his face

white and drawn, his eyes fixed on the other man, so helpless and inert.

The choice was made. The dice had rattled on the table. With a groan he hid his eyes behind his hand, afraid to see the other die, and through his brain beat unceasingly the phrase: "At each of the gates of Life stands a woman, waiting."

A woman, faithful, loyal unto death. And at this gate stood a man instead, hard, relentless, cold, refusing his fellow even a bare fighting chance.

And then he saw the girl's face with the tears wet upon her cheeks, heard her low whisper "I love him!" and saw the glory of her eyes. How she would loathe him if she knew! Would she not inevitably discover? If she had been there, the other might have lived.

With a smothered exclamation the doctor jumped to his feet again and his hand reached for the syringe. Just for one fraction of a second he paused; the next his hand had driven the tiny needle beneath the skin and pressed the piston home.

Quietly he withdrew the needle, laid the empty syringe down, and with calm unhurried movements bent to the fight again. His brain seemed numbed and dull, only his training and his knowledge serving him automatically. At last the other sighed and opened his eyes.

Three minutes later the sleeping native on the verandah received a kick that brought him to his feet. "Fetch the sister at once." The doctor's voice was hard. "Hurry!"

She came with an alacrity that told him she had been waiting for the summons, and her face looked an anxious question as she hurried into the light. The doctor spoke very quietly, his eyes inscrutable as they fastened on her face.

"He will live, Sister," he said. "It is—a miracle."

"Oh!" said the girl, and again "Oh!" She bent over the bed to look straight into those questioning grey eyes.

The man's mouth moved. He was trying to speak, and both listeners stooped to catch the muttered word his lips were forming.

"Faith!" It was barely distinguishable.

"Hush, dear!" The girl's voice was soft and golden, like a caress, and, straightening himself, the doctor, forgotten, turned away, stepping quietly to the window.

Across the sky the first grey light of dawn showed in a mere softening of the blackness. The gate of Life was open, and a woman waited, welcoming.



# GOOD LUCK

By W. PETT RIDGE

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

"FROM your Uncle Robert," announced Mrs. Vinall, inspecting the envelope casually, at the breakfast table. "Find my spectacles, somebody, and we'll see what he has to say for himself." Neither the son nor the daughter moved. Her husband, in the interests of labour-saving, offered, after taking thought, to read the communication. "He is my brother," decided Mrs. Vinall, "and the envelope bears my name."

"The parcel doesn't," remarked Alice, the daughter, languidly. "That's addressed to the Vinall Family, which includes little me."

"The one who fetches my spectacles," promised the mother, "shall be the one who opens the parcel." The generous bribe failed to excite interest; she sighed at memory of earlier times when the two were young enough to relish competition.

"He writes from Zanzibar," she announced on her return to the room, "that he has had years of hard work, and this is the first opportunity he could find for writing."

A murmur from the Vinalls conveyed astonishment that anyone should be so strenuously engaged.

"And he hopes to be making his way home shortly."

"Has he pouched any cash?" inquired Alice, with a show of interest.

"He doesn't say," replied her mother, glancing through the two pages. "Oh, here's a postscript overleaf. 'I am sending you what is called a lucky bean. A pod of ten was given to me, some time since, and I have made presents of them to my friends. Trust this one will bring good fortune to your household.'"

"I'll take charge of that," interposed Mr. Vinall, looking up from his newspaper.

"Like to carry it about in your pocket, I suppose?" remarked his son. Mr. Vinall nodded to save the trouble of speech. "Then you most certainly will do nothing of the kind."

"The unselfishness of parents!" exclaimed Alice caustically.

"Quiet, quiet!" ordered the mother with authority. "I won't have wrangling going on. I shall put the little parcel just as it is in my work-basket upstairs. And if it brings us luck, so much the better, and if it doesn't, we shall be none the worse. Now, now!"—as her husband attempted to speak.

"I was only going to say, my dear, that I'm inclined to think——"

"You'd best not make me get rattled, James."

"Inclined to think that your plan is a wise one."

"Oh!" she said rather disappointedly.

"I don't care how soon," remarked Alice, "Providence starts making bright eyes at me."

"There's just this," announced Mrs. Vinall, after a pause. "Luck is something that doesn't give itself the trouble to call at people's houses and beg to be allowed to come in. If you want to meet luck, you have to rouse yourself, and go out and find it."

Mrs. Vinall was called by a single knock to the front door. A shrill voice there said that aunt was unable to give her services in the scullery, owing to an engagement with a Band of Hope excursion. Mrs. Vinall, to the surprise of her family, loosened buttons at the wrist and turned back sleeves. "Then I shall have to pitch into the washing myself," she announced. The usefulness of example was shown by the fact that within half an hour the other members of the household had left. Charles, having written the previous night to excuse himself from office on account of indisposition, decided, nevertheless, to go to the City.

So much had been privately expected from the gift that chagrin was shown that evening when the Vinalls discovered that Alice alone had benefited. Arrival in Mortimer Street West discovered, it seemed,



that Lady Claridge, a valued customer, had inquired whether the forewoman happened to know a young woman capable of acting as secretary and companion, at an excellent salary per annum. Alice Vinall went at once, with the ready permission of the forewoman, to Grosvenor Street, and was engaged without a moment's delay; Mrs. Vinall, ever an admirer of the aristocracy, and not unacquainted with modern fiction, began, in receiving the news, to speculate on the likelihood of Alice marrying

abashed by the fact that they could make no contribution to the triumphs of the day. Charles said his head clerk had thanked him for coming from a sick bed to take a part in office traffic. Charles was not able to say whether this could be reckoned a genuine expression or one tinged with delicate sarcasm.

To Mr. Vinall, father of Charles, came the next stroke of luck. On the printed cards which he used were so many occupations that to glance at the titles was to induce



"Charles was introduced."

the eldest son of the Claridge family. It appeared Alice's new employer was the widow of a City knight, with no children, and Mrs. Vinall, changing anticipations, gave herself the joy of imagining a will that would leave everything to Miss Alice Vinall, "whose devotion to me I can never sufficiently repay." For herself, Mrs. Vinall was feeling tired but contented after a day of unusual hard work in the vicinity of the scullery copper; she intended, in future, to manage domestic tasks without help. Mr. Vinall and his son were slightly

wonder; it seemed to the average person that anybody engaged in fire and life insurance, valuation of land and property, patent agency, and, finally, contributor to the leading magazines and periodicals—that such a one must surely be leading a crowded life in which rest was unknown. To Mr. Vinall came the idea that in late years he had, perhaps, been guilty of slackness; too much inclined to allow younger men to snatch at opportunity, and apt to allow business to slip from his hands. Wherefore the head of the family gave orders that



breakfast in the future should be ready at half-past seven, was himself out of the house on the first morning of the new arrangement by ten minutes to eight (so that the newsagent in Chiswick High Road, under misapprehension, said, "You're rather late getting home, sir!") and by half-past the hour, after scanning advertisements in the omnibus, was at an office in Paddington.

"First come, first served!" remarked the head of the firm at the end of a ten minutes' interval.

And Mr. Vinall, as the new editor of a trade journal, started on his duties before the clock gave the hour of nine.

He found that his literary style, reckoned archaic in some quarters and unsuited to modern requirements, was here the very manner required. The proprietor of the journal, inspecting results late in the afternoon, was delighted. "The right man," he cried, "in the right place!" Mr. Vinall, arriving home at Chiswick, spoke with so much pride of the day's occupation that his wife was forced to remind him that the credit was due to her brother's thoughtful present from West Africa.

"I've always been slightly superstitious," she admitted, "and after this experience I shall never be anything else. It's really marvellous, when you come to think of it, that just a small bean in a cardboard box upstairs should have all this influence. Why, if people only knew— By the by, Alice is having classes in shorthand and typing," she mentioned. Mr. Vinall nodded approval of the news. "Charles seems to be the only one who hasn't been affected to any great extent."

It did, indeed, take some time for Charles's luck to bestir itself in a resolute manner. Returning each night, and listening to his father's report concerning editorial cares and triumphs, to Alice's account of social schemes in which Lady Claridge was engaged (Lady Claridge, thanks to Alice's tuition, was making a great score as a brief and attractive speaker at drawing-room meetings), to his mother's announcement of improved health consequent on close attention to duties of the house—these object lessons gradually impressed the young man. Hitherto one of the first to prepare for departure from office so soon as the hour drew near, he, to the astonishment of his

colleagues, remained at his desk busily engaged, and exchanged "Good nights" in an absorbed way. The housekeeper, in clearing up, pursued him from stool to stool, and referred meaningly to the case of a nephew who, by giving over-much attention to



"Dash it all—if it hasn't dropped through a hole in the pocket that I ought to have got mended!"

business, together with being crossed in love and gone on acrostics, managed to become dotty, and was now at Claybury, costing his relatives so much per week. Disregarding these warnings, Charles Vinall continued his new methods. The head clerk noted an improvement in the work, and spoke of it approvingly. A vacancy occurred at the West End branch, and Charles was selected. In a luncheon hour he, in strolling down Bond Street, happened to meet his sister and Lady Claridge, who were coming out of a private view at the Grosvenor. Charles was introduced, a short conversation took place on Art, and where we should be without it. Lady



Claridge told Alice afterwards that young Mr. Vinall had a striking appearance, and inquired his precise age. On receiving the information, she sighed and expressed the wish that she had her time to live over again. Mrs. Vinall, told of this in the strictest

next encounter, her ladyship spoke of Charles as gentlemanly, and referred to the possibility of inviting him to a mid-day meal on a Sunday.

All would have gone smoothly at this time if Mrs. Vinall, in engaging a servant



confidence, repeated it to her son, and advised him to take the desperate course of buying a new silk hat.

"What anyone has got in their head matters a good deal," she declared; "what they've got on it is still more important."

Alice was able to report that, after the

(and thus revising an earlier decision), had not chosen one of superior attainments, one who had studied at domestic classes with notable results. The new girl, directing the purchase of a new broom, used it with an energy that Mrs. Vinall had never before witnessed; she rearranged the furniture,



gave to the dust carts of the Borough Council much which she designated as rubbish, and did not cease to protest until new linoleum had been laid down. The ground floor attended to in the early weeks, the reformer took upstairs in hand, and it was here disaster occurred.

"You didn't want to keep, ma'am, anything that was in that old work-basket of yours?"

"Gladys," cried Mrs. Vinall hysterically, "don't tell me you've been and destroyed that little sealed-up cardboard box that was inside!"

"Popped it in the fireplace," admitted the girl.

The grate was cleared out with frantic haste; nothing could be found. Mrs. Vinall took to the sofa and cried steadily for the rest of the afternoon. Regaining courage after this, she told herself to be brave, and to say nothing of the shocking trouble that had come upon the family; it would be enough to wait and see luck change, without depressing the others by woeful anticipation. No bad news came that night. Mr. Vinall's paper had two extra pages of advertisements. Lady Claridge was using her influence and the influence of everyone she knew to obtain for Alice a berth as secretary to an Association established in '61, and likely to go on for ever. Charles had received the invitation to lunch.

"I can't make it out," declared Mrs. Vinall at the end of the week to the maid. "It's all so puzzling. Perfect mystery to me."

"You mean about that cardboard box, ma'am? Oh, I found it again. Quite meant to have told you, but it slipped my memory. I'd thrown it, seemingly, into an empty fireplace in the back room. You'll find it in your work-basket if you look."

"That," said Mrs. Vinall gratefully, "accounts for everything!"

Her brother Robert, on reaching Southampton, sent a postcard which said, "Arrived safely. Will call in course of week or so. Something to explain." The Vinall family speculated on the possibility of the relative appearing in company with wealth, but their own success prevented anything like eagerness, and when he did eventually call on a Sunday when Charles had returned from Church parade in Hyde Park, a meal at Grosvenor Street, and an offer of marriage which he had accepted bashfully, then Uncle Robert, a man of plain speech, announced he had done well during his absence from England. So well, indeed, that he had felt justified in looking for an old sweetheart at Guildford, finding her, and marrying her.

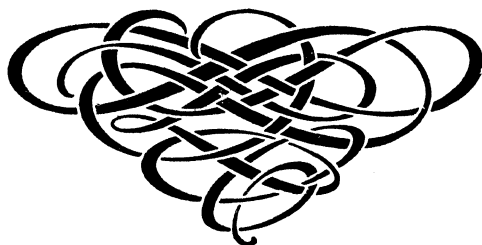
"That was what you had to explain, then, was it?" remarked Mrs. Vinall good-humouredly.

"Guess again," he said bluntly.

"We mustn't forget, my dear," said Mr. Vinall, "to express in some way our acknowledgments to your brother for his considerable thoughtfulness, and I go so far as to say genuine benevolence, in sending us——"

"That's what I'd got on my mind," interrupted the visitor. "'Tisn't often I make a mistake, but after I'd sent off that little box I discovered I'd forgot to put the lucky bean inside. So"—searching his waistcoat—"I've brought one along. Dash it all"—with distress—"if it hasn't dropped through a hole in the pocket that I ought to have got mended!" He stamped up and down the room, condemning himself in set terms.

"Don't worry," urged the Vinalls soothingly. "We've managed very well without it!"







#### SYMPATHY.

WEALTHY BRIDE: And on the second day of our honeymoon my husband got a letter to say he'd won the big prize in the Boosters' Ballot.

CALLER (absent minded): What appalling luck—two days too late!

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### LOULOU'S SILVER FOX.

*By E. Fordham Spence.*

THE first version that I had was from Loulou. Her real name is Louisa, but everybody calls her "Lou," or "Loulou," or "Louloulou," for she is not a bit like a Louisa.

"That brute of a man——" she began.

"Meaning, no doubt, your husband."

"Yes, William, of course. He won't let me have that silver fox. The brute! And I really did my best to get it. I gave him a beautiful little dinner yesterday evening; you know how fond he is of food."

"And you too, my dear." She smiled. "But how did you manage it? Your cook's hopeless."

"Of course I took him to a restaurant. Yes, he paid for the dinner. Then I took him to the theatre. Yes, he paid for the seats. What's the good of a husband if he doesn't pay for things? And I gave him a stiff whisky and soda when we come home; of course it was his whisky. Yes, I had a tiny drop myself, to keep him company. And he promised to come to Krakowski's in the morning and see the stole. I gave him kidneys and bacon for breakfast next morning; he is fond of them.

No, I paid for that out of the housekeeping money. They were not quite a success. He said I ought to have ordered three; for the cook, who really does try, burnt one to a cinder and sent up the other raw, and William thought that if there had been a third it might have been half-way between the two. We had to start very early because he had a case at eleven with no leader, and we got to Krakowski's late, and he was in a horrid temper, and made a row, and said I couldn't have the stole."

"And whose fault was it that you were late?"

"Why, his, of course; he would stop looking at the things in the other shops. Why, we were ages looking at one where there was a sale of golf shoes. Luckily there was not time for him to go in, or he would have wasted my time and his money there."

That was Loulou's version. I heard William's a few days later, when I charged him with treating Loulou badly. He laughed and said that he would explain.

"I knew there was something up when Loulou was so awfully sweet, and I half promised over-night. The 'kidney punch' at breakfast was quite pathetic. I felt in a jolly



good temper that morning, for I had got a letter saying that a fat case which I thought was settled was going to be fought, and Themis was to lead me, which meant about a four-hundred-guinea brief for me. She promised to be ready early, since I was for the plaintiff in a case with no leader, fixed for eleven o'clock. Of course she was late. When she was dressed she decided to change her hat, and then she changed her frock and shoes to go with the hat,

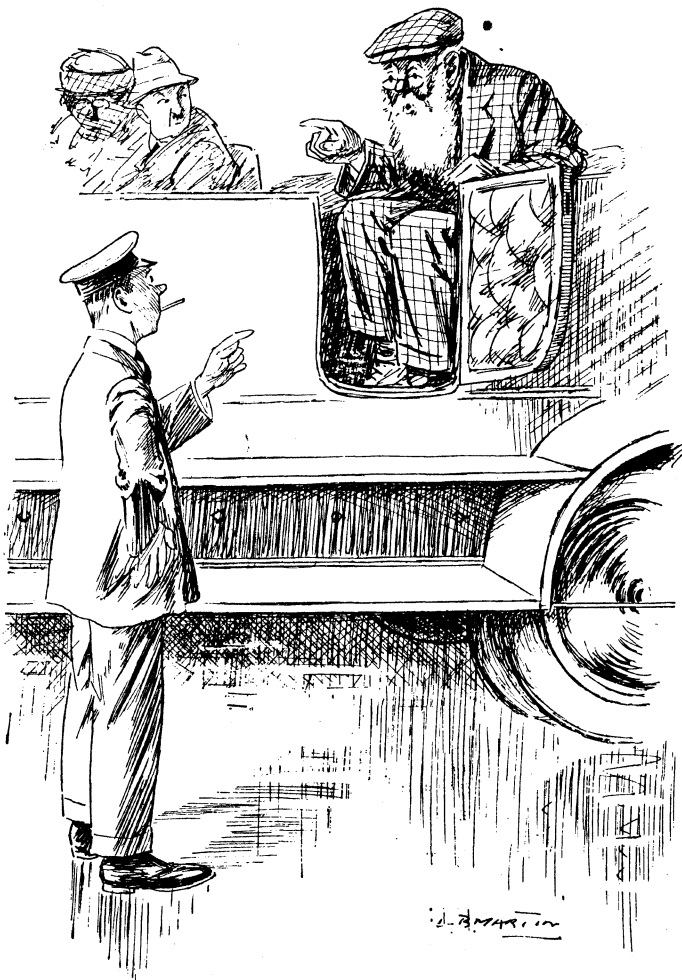
upon studying the window to see if they had a chair like the one I bought a month ago.

"What's the good?" I asked. "I've got the chair, and don't want another."

"Yes, but," said Loulou, "they may have charged too much."

"But," I replied, "you said it was dirt cheap."

"However, Loulou insisted, and even walked up a side-street so as to see the whole of the



A LESSON IN POLITENESS.

CONDUCTOR: Alight here, sir!

TOURIST: Certainly not! You can just buy your own matches for not saying please?

and when she got the shoes on, had to take them off again to put on another pair of stockings to suit the shoes, and, of course, there was not a taxi anywhere."

"There never is," I murmured with splendid originality.

"When we had done about a hundred yards we came to a furniture shop. Loulou insisted

shop. There we saw one that resembled ours a little—had the same number of legs, anyhow—and she went in and asked the price, and after a long time came out again furious, saying that we'd been swindled by the other shop, and I ought not to be allowed out without a nursemaid; and I answered that I didn't mind so long as I chose the nursemaid, so she called me a brute, and marched off in a huff. When we had gone along a bit further, we came to a shop with women's clothes and things, and she stopped.

"Look at that one," she said, pointing to a skirt on some sort of a dummy. 'Fancy seventeen guineas for that!'

"And there's no coat with it," I replied, anxious not to raise an argument.

"My dear man, that's the coat lying at the foot!" And I did see a sort of tangled thing on the ground.

"And I wouldn't have it as a gift," she continued. 'And the price is outrageous, there aren't two pounds of stuff in it, and the labour wouldn't cost a pound.'

"There's the on-cost."

"What's that?"

"Oh, the overhead charges, advertisements, rent, rates, taxes, insurance, depreciation, interest on capital, et-cetera."

"Oh, never mind all that. What has it to do with the cost of the dress, you old silly?"

"Naturally I gave it up, and managed to drag her away. A little later we got to a hat shop.

"Oh, look at that dinky little hat—only seven guineas!" said Loulou. 'I haven't a hat fit to wear.'

"That, I thought, was quite correct—although she has dozens of hats—so in we went, and she tried it on, and didn't like it, then she tried another and another and another."



I think there were seventeen that she didn't like. I stayed behind for a moment to apologise for giving so much trouble and buying nothing. Loulou said that it was to flirt with the girl, though, goodness knows, she was as ugly as a London statue. When we got outside I told Loulou firmly that we shouldn't reach Krakowski's in time if we didn't hurry, so we bustled along pretty well despite the shops. At last we reached Krakowski's, very hot and out of breath and my temper rotten—you know I have a little bit of a temper."

"I shouldn't call it a little bit," I replied.

"Luckily there was a taxi outside, so I told it to wait for me. 'I have just five minutes,' I said firmly to Loulou.

"Won't the silly old judge wait if you telephone?' I shook my head fiercely. 'Well, you ought to have a leader; it looks better, and you get a bigger fee, and don't have to do the work—which doesn't sound fair.'

"By this time we had got out of the lift. I wonder why all the shop lifts have red-haired girls to work them—rather jolly little girls, some of them, though I didn't say so to Loulou. An oily foreigner showed us the famous stole. It looked worth a fiver, but they asked two hundred and fifty guineas—not pounds, mind you, guineas. I don't think tradesmen ought to reckon in guineas. I was prepared to give it, wicked as it seemed, but then Loulou wanted to look at another. 'What's the use?' I asked. 'Either you want this stole or you don't.'

"Oh, but it would be dreadful if there was a nicer one, and it didn't cost much more.'

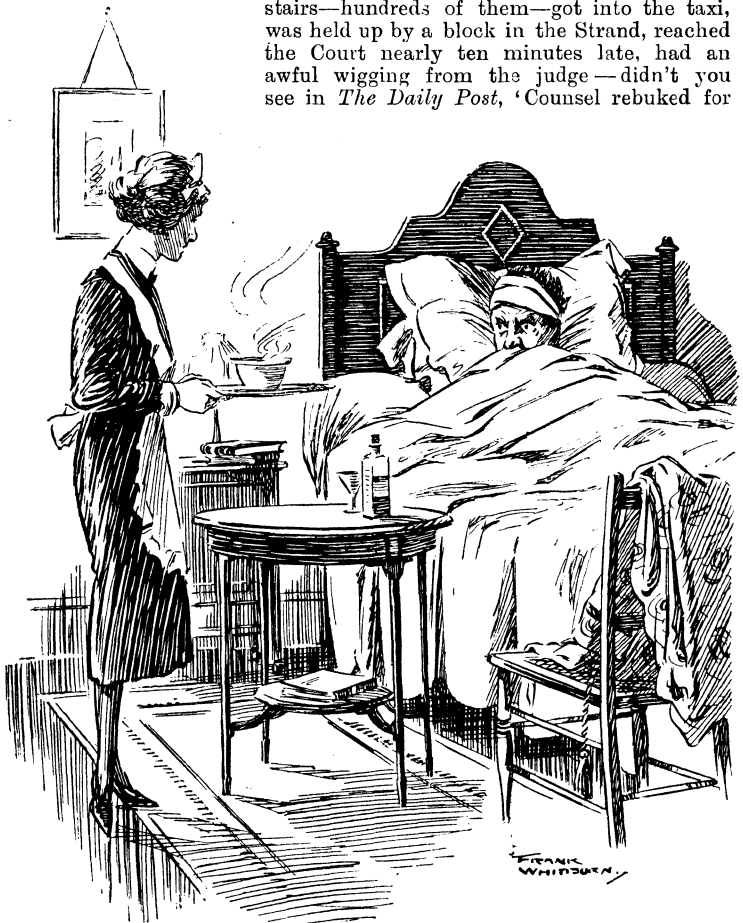
"Cost much more!' I shouted. 'It's this or nothing, Louisa.'

"Perhabs Matame vod vish to zee ziss one,' said the oily foreigner, taking something out of a box. By this time I really had got my rag up. 'It's that one,' I said in rather

a loud voice, I fear, 'or none, and it's now or never!'

"You needn't shout at the gentleman,' said Loulou, with great dignity, 'and please remember you are speaking to your defenceless little wife, but that we are not at home, where nobody can hear how you talk to her.'

"That was a bit too much. 'I forbid madam to buy the stole!' I cried louder still. Then I bounced out of the place, ran down the stairs—hundreds of them—got into the taxi, was held up by a block in the Strand, reached the Court nearly ten minutes late, had an awful wiggling from the judge—didn't you see in *The Daily Post*, 'Counsel rebuked for



NO HARM IN ASKING.

MAID (to victim of accident): Please, sir, the man who ran over you with his car sends his compliments an' says did you notice a little nut lyin' about before they picked you up?

wasting public time'?—lost the case and lost the client, rather a good one, and that's the truth about the stole, and she shan't have it."

"But not the whole truth, William," I said sweetly. "What about the golf shoes?"

He laughed. "There was a clock in the boot shop window, and by that clock we looked at the shoes for only two minutes—only two minutes out of ninety—and they were jolly good shoes, and awfully cheap, almost at



half price, and Loulou said it was a shocking extravagance, as I already had two quite good pairs. However, I got a pair going home, but I had them sent straight to the club."

"*A voleur voleur et demi*," was my only comment.



#### WIRELESS IN 1066.

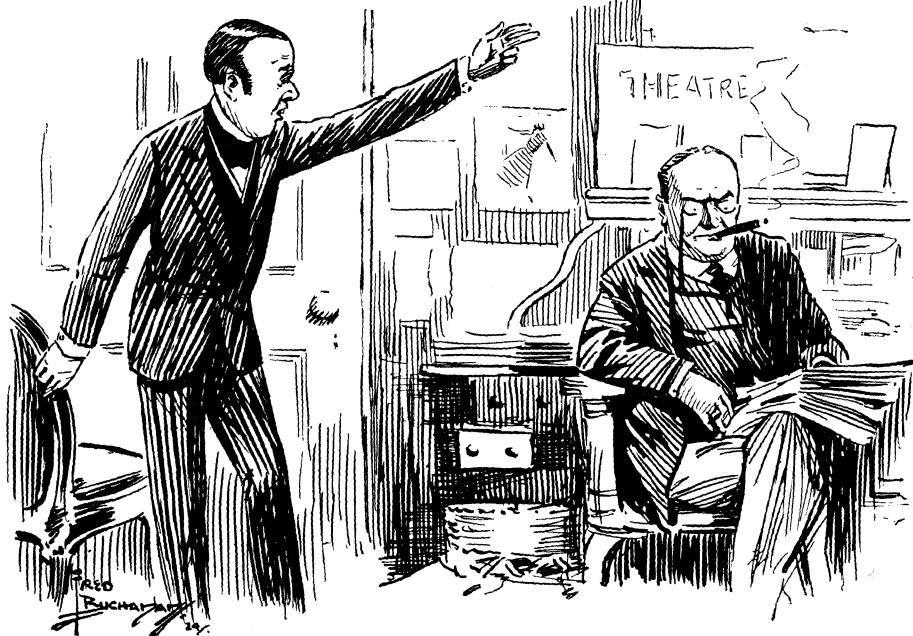
"WHAT would William the Conqueror have thought of wireless?" asks a contemporary.

In the first place a mediæval Marconi would probably have been tried for witchcraft and met with a shocking fate. But had he succeeded in "putting it over," we can imagine some of

It appears that one McIntosh, who had summoned a doctor in the middle of the night, thus addressed the medical man when he arrived: "Aye, doctor, mon, I sorry we ca'd ye on such a treevial job. Ye see, we thoct wee Wullie had swallowed a hauf croon, but my wife has been countin' up her cheenge, an' it turns out to be only a penny."



A COUNTRY clergyman was in the habit of paying frequent visits to London, and thought it would be convenient to be a member of a club. In due course he was put up for, and elected to, a club which was noted for its



THE ONLY ONE.

AUTHOR: I feel sure a review like that would be a riot—I have struck out an entirely original line.

MANAGER: Yes, that's just it, my boy—why did you strike it out?

the items in a radio programme of the Norman period.

Children's Hour—Uncle Wamba, the Court Jester, will tell funny stories.

Women's Chat—Tips on tapestry. How to cook peacocks and brew wassail.

Concert by minstrels from all the best Baronial Halls—

Song: "When father slew the dragon in the wood."

Harp Solo by Jenkin the Jjongleur.

Recitation: "How Bill Adams won the Battle of Hastings."

Talk to Men—The way to rescue damsels in distress, by Sir Hubert de Burgh.

Tournaments Results.

Eight o'clock—Curfew signal to all stations.

late hours and the general air of jollity of its members.

The new member, blissfully unaware of its reputation, paid a visit to London and stayed at the club.

After his long journey from the North he retired to bed very early and awoke equally early.

He dressed and went downstairs to look for breakfast before eight o'clock, and in the dining-room was surprised to discover that its only occupant was one weary waiter.

As the clergyman was about to sit down at one of the tables, the waiter approached him and said apologetically: "I'm sorry, sir, but we are not allowed to serve suppers after seven a.m."





# True health food —and delicious

There will be no difficulty in getting the children to eat "good food" if you serve Puffed Rice or Puffed Wheat. Dainty, delicious, *fresh*, Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice have something else to offer beside their unique and delicious flavours, — they are real energy foods.

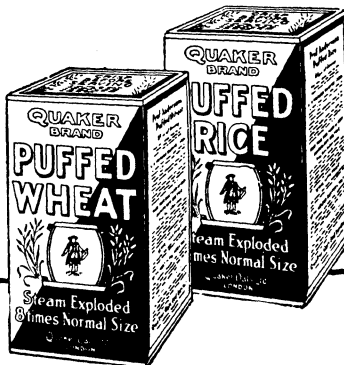
The wonderful gun-cooking process — explained on the packets — which puffs the grains also splits up every food cell

for easy digestion and sets free the valuable, *balanced* nourishment of whole rice and wheat respectively.

Get a packet of each from your grocer to-day. Serve with milk or cream, stewed or preserved fruit—or try some of the recipes printed on the packets. See how the kiddies will enjoy such a breakfast or supper. You can be sure it does them good. No cooking, no trouble—ready to eat.

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## A HINT TO DISAPPOINTED AUTHORS.

*By R. T. Lee.*

"FULL many a gem——" But you've heard that. What I mean is that "Every cloud has——" But you know that, too. All I really want to say is that, but for a happy inspiration, the following fine imaginative effort would never have seen print:—

"There is a very special melancholy about the time after lunch on an autumn day. That period of the day at any season is desultory and characterless, but on an autumn day it reaches the limit of desolation. There is no time in the day which is so regularly and persistently wasted as the hour immediately following the mid-day meal. Many of us, probably, have recognised this fact, and have made up our minds to make use of that hour. 'I will make a practice,' we say to ourselves, 'of doing the little things that I do not find time for. I will form a habit of writing to my wife's relations, or I will do half an hour's gardening regularly after lunch.' But, somehow, it never comes off, and the period between lunch and the work or pleasure of the afternoon retains for most of us its melancholy futility.

"It is in the daily routine at our domestic hearth that the depression of 'after lunch,' chiefly assails us, or, rather—being too invertebrate to do anything so definite—clings to us. Picture the colourless desolation of the room where you have eaten your lunch on an autumn day. The pale, weak sun outside coming fitfully from behind grey clouds, which appear too feebly inconsequent even to rain, flickers hopelessly in the puddles, and a little chilly wind occasionally rouses the sodden brown leaves on the lawn, where the grass has grown long and untidy, like the hair of a slovenly man. The moist trees still have a few expiring leaves left, but look resigned to the passing of their glory, as though they realised total bereavement as inevitable and were merely waiting for the end. Inside the room this same

weak sun catches with a feeble ray the glasses on the table, lighting momentarily the water left in them. The lifeless inconsequence of the scene is intensified by the dismal remains of the meal that is done, the odd bits of bread and crumbs on the cloth, the cold gravy on the plates on the side, and the depressing brown skins of autumnal baked apples, disembowelled and thrown aside. That black, chilly travesty of comfort to which household economy customarily reduces the dining-room fire during the daytime smokes miserably in the grate,



YOUNG AMBITION.

emitting the faint sooty odour common to fires that are not 'kept in' all day, and a few belated flies stagger sleepily about the table-cloth or fly monotonously round the lamp-shades.

"If it would only snow or rain or hail, you could settle down and forget the futility of your surroundings and the baked apple skins. But no, that feeble sun pervades everything, and only serves to call up regrets for the glorious cheering sun of the departed summer. Its anæmic rays have no promise of better





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things; they are like water with which you are trying to heat up your bath, but which is running in lukewarm, so that you know with a hopeless certainty that it can never regain its comforting warmth to cheer your body and soul."

Here, originally, my descriptive little article ended. It was consistently returned to me by agents, editors, and other blighters of youthful hopes, but the happy inspiration above-mentioned led me to add the following paragraph, and I have gained an ample reward.

"Do you have this after-lunch feeling? Then ask your chemist for a 1s. 3d. bottle of

"WHAT I say is this," shouted the argumentative debater, "you may say with Mr. Jones that this is a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other; but I maintain that it is very far from being anything of the sort. Indeed, I go further and affirm that it is exactly the contrary."



A WAVE has been discovered in the body of the earth which moves once in every eight thousand years. So different from the waist-line which, according to the Paris dress experts has recently moved for the third time this year.



CULTURE ON THE EMBANKMENT.

"Is that Queen Bodega's Needle?"

"I'm not sure, miss, but Casabianca's Chariot is further along, Westminster way."

DOZING AND CURINGHAM'S ANTI-INDIGESTION TABLETS. One taken before each meal will set you right. (ADVT.)"



CUSTOMER: If this is all wool, why is it marked cotton on the label?

SHOPMAN: That's to fool the moths, madam.



MOTHER: Good Gracious! Baby has eaten a worm.

FATHER: Where on earth did she find it? I'm going fishing, and I need some bait.

Facing Third Cover.]

MR. NEWRICH was showing a friend round the estate. "I've been done over some of these 'ere trees," he remarked. "That's supposed to be a weeping willow, and it ain't shed a single tear up to now."



HOUSE-HUNTER: "Isn't it rather a drawback to have this pantry facing south?"

AGENT: "Quite an advantage, I assure you. The last lady who lived here put a dozen eggs in that pantry one day, and the next morning she found twelve young Buff Orpingtons rushing round the shelves."



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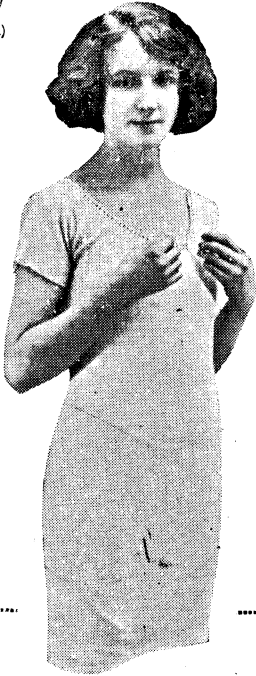
# THE WINDSOR



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ON THE ROAD TO THE HORSE FAIR. BY LILIAN CHEVIOT.

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"Peregrine pushed back his hood and wiped his face. This was streaming with sweat. 'Could—could you take the plunge with me, Joan?'"

# FALLEN SPARROWS

By DORNFORD YATES

Author of "*And Five Were Foolish*," "*Valerie French*," "*Berry and Co.*," "*Jonah and Co.*," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

"SOMETIMES think," said Mrs. Carey Below, "that you are losing your mind."

Peregrine Carey Below put a hand to his head.

"I'm not so sure I'm not," he said wearily.

"Is that meant to be rude?"

Peregrine raised his eyes to meet the glint of steel in those of his wife. For a moment he seemed upon the edge of protest: then the cold, level gaze bore down his spirit.

Peregrine felt as though he were seated in cold water. He shifted uneasily.

"No, no," he said. "Of course it isn't. I—I only——"

"Because if it is," said Mrs. Below silkily, "if it is, we shall have to have an understanding." She bridled menacingly. "I was not bred to rudeness. Selfishness I can put up with—fortunately for me: I can suffer a fool—I've done it day and night for seven years: but rudeness is an assault, and that I will not endure."

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"I assure you, Marion——"

"D'you mind holding your tongue?"

The words bit at the air, and Peregrine winced. "As I say, I was not bred to rudeness. My father was old-fashioned enough to treat my mother with courtesy, if not respect. I'm not such a fool as to expect those emotions from you because my father was a gentleman, but if you could manage to suppress your coarser instincts at least in my presence, I should be grateful. Personally, I see nothing heinous in my wish to attend a dance. Life's flat enough, Heaven knows. Besides, it's been done before. That is what dances are for—Peregrine. I confess I did not expect my suggestion to be cordially received. That would have been unreasonably optimistic. It hasn't taken me seven years to discover that social intercourse doesn't appeal to you. But it never occurred to me that my mere expression of a very natural desire would be the signal for an outburst of abuse. But there again—I never expect contumely. I've had it and stood it for seven years, and I suppose most women would have become case-hardened. But I'm different. I cannot realise that the old order is changed, that you cannot spell the word 'chivalry,' that to you women are chattels whose only office is to reflect the glorious will of man. What if our passages are booked? I suppose they can be cancelled."

"Certainly, dear," said Peregrine. "I'll—I'll do it this morning."

"No, you won't," said his wife. "You'll do it this afternoon. This morning we're playing golf. Which reminds me—have you ordered a car?"

"I will if you like," said Peregrine, rising. "I shouldn't think it was neces——"

"Why argue?" said Mrs. Below grimly.

"Why not be big-minded enough to admit your mistake? If there is one thing I despise more than another, it is a man or woman who deliberately sticks to their point when they know that they're wrong. And why should I run the risk of having to walk because you won't take the trouble to order a car? Of course it's the old thing—lack of consideration. First, every possible obstacle is put in the way of my going to a dance just because you don't want the bother of writing a note. Then my convenience is to be jeopardised. . . ." She raised her eyes to heaven and let the sentence go. "You ought to have known my father," she continued piously. "With him my mother came

first *always*. It never occurred to him to argue. She only had to. . . ." She stopped there to peer violently at the floor. "What have you got on your feet?"

"My—buckskin shoes, dear," said Peregrine.

"Rubber-soled?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Below inspired vehemently, cast a reproachful glance skywards, as though to suggest that, while allowing and prepared to suffer the inscrutable authority of God, she expected it to be counted to her for righteousness, and set her teeth.

"Go and change," she said shortly, using the tone of one who, tried beyond endurance, forgets that he is addressing a fellow-man. "I never thought I should have to dress you, but it seems I was wrong. We're going to play golf, my darling—not tennis. Golf."

"I—I know," faltered Peregrine, "but——"

"That's right," said his wife. "Argue the point. Give me the lie. Where are you going?"

"To change," said her husband thickly.

"What about the car?"

In a silence too charged for words, Peregrine turned.

"You see?" continued his wife. "Your own convenience first, and mine second. The car's for me, the shoes are for you. Instinctively you put the shoes first. . . ." She shrugged her shoulders, and a bleak look settled on her face. "Of course I blame myself. I've spoiled you. You're naturally selfish, and because I loved you and wanted you to be happy I spoiled you to death. And now I'm paying for it." For a moment she appeared to contemplate her state. Then she flung up her head. "And you stand by, looking like a plaster saint!" Her eyes raked him vertically. "My word, that injured air! Always the little innocent—the poor little village idiot that's always being accused of something he's never done. I suppose you hope one day to get away with it. Melt my heart, or something. Well, the sooner you realise that martyrdom makes me tired, the better for you. If you don't agree, why not say so and put your point like a man? But you could never do that. The trouble with you is that you weren't at a Public School. There you'd have learned manners and—well, they've got a very short way with plaster saints."

After a moment—



"I'll go and order a car," said her husband quietly, and left the room.

The disorder was a very ordinary one, but it was a bad case.

In the first place, it is due to Peregrine to say that he was not fair game.

When Mrs. Below observed that her husband ought to have gone to a public school, she hit the nail on the head. That would have altered everything. But Peregrine was an only and delicate child. When he was twelve he had spent six years on his back. Not until he was twenty had he been 'passed sound.' His most impressionable years had been spent in a shelter such as only a widow's devotion to a son who is not expected to live can ever erect. He certainly went to Oxford, but use held. His vacations were happier than the terms he kept, and after two years he returned to his mother's side. Then the War came. . . One morning his Commission arrived. His mother shared his joy, but died in her sleep that night. Three years later the sparrow fell on the ground.

Peregrine Carey Below had fallen in love with his wife, and she had exploited his fall to the top of her bent. I say 'fallen.' To be more accurate, he had ventured to look in the pool, and his future wife had promptly kicked him in.

Swiftly, though imperceptibly, the garlands which he had twined rapturously about his limbs had turned to fetters which he could not unloose. The garlands had been supplied by Mrs. Below.

The man was in thrall to a personality—a vigorous magnetism, which sucked the marrow from his bones and, waxing fat on it, grew more exacting and savage every day. Physical bonds there were none. The two were childless: in her own right Marion Carey Below had not a penny piece. Yet so well had she wrought that full two-thirds of his income went into her privy purse, while of that which was left, her husband accounted to her for every farthing. For seven years she had bluffed him—with an empty hand: and he paid and paid and paid. . . The bluff slid into torment—for the love of the thing: the torment, into the order of the day. Mrs. Carey Below had reduced nagging to a fine art. Her vocabulary was rich, her tongue fluent, her brain quick. Perversion, avoidance, falsehood were so many irons in the fire. It was a bad case.

The lady was thirty-eight, handsome and as hard as nails. Always ruthless, she had appropriated Peregrine out of hand. The

fact that he was betrothed to another girl did not concern her. I doubt if his marriage would have stood in her way. The best was good enough for her, no matter to whom it belonged. The idea of troubling to hold him never entered her head: the very sublimity of her self-confidence grappled him to her soul. There was no love in her—nor ever had been. Women disliked her with cause, but to men she appealed. The appeal was deliberate. To her, male admiration was the breath of life. 'A born *vivandière*,' says someone. Not at all. She would have loathed the job. The salt would have lost his savour. Male admiration must be won at another's expense. To diminish all other women was her heart's desire. Money, convenience—everything was offered upon this altar. Peregrine's money, Peregrine's convenience. Marriage had brought him indeed more kicks than halfpence.

The man was thirty-six, quiet, tall, good-looking. You would not have written him down as overborne. His brown eyes were mild, certainly, but his mouth was firm and his carriage dignified. He was easy-going and regarded the Line of Least Resistance as the Rock of Ages. Such confidence had proved fatal. Long ago the Rock had become a straw, but he clung to it desperately. That the torrent was but breast-high he did not appear to perceive. Possibly he was fascinated. There was, certainly, much of the python about his lady. The probability is that he was afraid—had not the moral courage to throw off the yoke. One might have thought that the instinct of self-preservation would have hounded him out of his hell. But the instinct was always still-born. Her careless, rampant personality scorched it in embryo. It was a bad case.

Peregrine descended listlessly to the cool hall.

The Carey Belows had only arrived at Biarritz the night before, and had been due to leave in ten days' time: but, as we have seen, the date of the Domino Ball had altered everything. For the second time in three weeks their passages to New York were to be cancelled, and fresh arrangements made. Hotels, Banks, Solicitors would have to be told. Policies of Assurance would have to be reindorsed. . . . Peregrine had learned to leave nothing to chance. It was not good enough.

The porter was provisionally urbane.

"A gar for thee gough? Certainly, sir. Do you want it at once?"

"No, but I want one ready."



"Verry good, sir. There are always some taxis here. When you come down——"

"Order it now," said Below. "And let it wait."

"As you please, sir."

As he did so the gates were opened, and two people emerged—a gentle, white-haired woman and a tall, steady-eyed girl of thirty-four.

Idly Peregrine registered them as an



"There wasn't a taxi or something, and he was all hot and bothered and ready to cry. 'I ordered it,' he kept saying, 'nearly an hour ago.' She just purred back at him, with veiled eyes. . . . It was really painful."

He touched a bell-push, and a gong stammered outside.

Peregrine stepped to the lift.

English lady of title with an American niece.

Herein he was perfectly right.



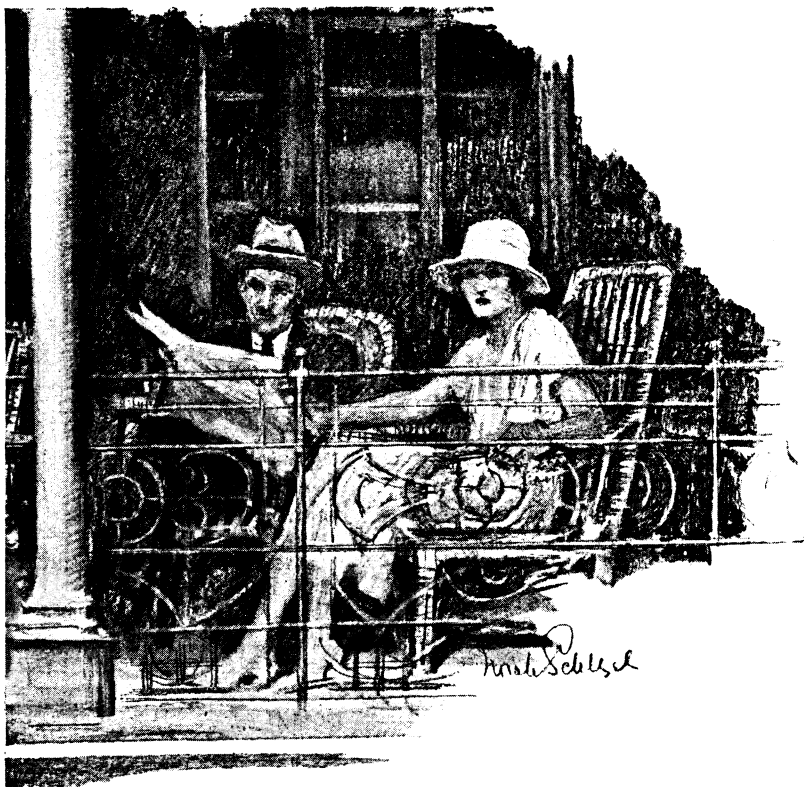
That, as she passed him, the girl turned very pale he did not remark.

He had no idea who she was.

After all, he had not seen her for more than seven years.

was in his handwriting, but it was not his note. Their common enemy had written it—the future Mrs. Below. Joan hated Mrs. Below with a bitter, undying hate.

She hoped—prayed that Peregrine was



That Joan Purchase Atlee, young, rich, attractive, would never marry seemed to be past all question. Her aunt, however, refused to abandon hope. Joan was so obviously cut for wedlock and motherhood. To suckle the memory of a broken dream was out of all reason. 'Men were deceivers ever.' Besides. . . . But Joan was resolute. She had loved Peregrine with a whole heart, and no other man had ever touched her at all. More. Peregrine had loved her. He had not left her: he had been stolen away. She had never seen Mrs. Below, but she was certain of that. Her man was faithful. If he had been bewitched, so much the worse for them both. Her man was faithful, and she would be faithful to him.

Joan bore Peregrine no grudge. It was not a case of forgiveness: Joan had nothing to forgive. Peregrine and she had been undone—by a third party. The wretched, stumbling note that had broken her heart

happy: that he never could be so happy as he would have been with her she had no manner of doubt. He was her man.

It follows that when after seven years Joan Purchase Atlee encountered Peregrine and found his eyes lack-lustre she was profoundly moved.

Her letter to her twin-sister in distant Philadelphia shall speak for itself.

. . . I've seen him, Betty—at last. He's here, in this hotel—Peregrine Carey Below, my man. Two hours ago I stepped out of the elevator almost into his arms. I nearly fainted. The hall seemed to heel over and I had to walk uphill. Betty, he — didn't — know — me. . . . That hurt rather, at first. You know. Nasty jar to one's pride. The answer is that I've changed even more than I knew. After all, seven years isn't a week-end. . . . But that's by the way. The sting soon died in a sense of immeasurable relief. Truly Providence is wise. Supposing he had known me. What a



hellish position it would have been! *Melodrama with an edge. . . . Never mind, Peregrine didn't know me, and that's that. But, Betty, he's miserable—so very wretched. The moment I saw him I knew. He's going grey at the temples, but that's nothing—he's rising thirty-seven. But his eyes, Betty, his eyes. I could have wept to see them. Dull and strained they were—dull and strained and listless. . . . his blessed, gentle eyes. . . . Don't think I'm such a fool as to think it's because of me. If it were, he'd have known me. No. It's his wife, Betty—Mrs. Carey Below. She's making my man wretched. Seven years ago she smashed my life, and now she's smashing his. . . . I don't know how long it's been going on. I don't know anything—yet. But I saw them go out this morning, and I had a good look at her. Man-mad, Betty. Tough as you make 'em, with a mouth like a steel trap. Rather like Nesta Dudoy, but better-looking. No use for women at all. Very well dressed, and her clothes well put on. Hair too good to be true and a nice skin. And Peregrine fears her, Betty. There wasn't a taxi or something, and he was all hot and bothered and ready to cry. 'I ordered it,' he kept saying, 'nearly an hour ago.' She just purred back at him, with veiled eyes. . . . It was really painful. Peregrine rattled because she must wait thirty seconds whilst they sent for a cab! One's seen it before, of course: but not in a man like him. He's so quiet and reserved and strong naturally that only a proper shock should be able to shake him up—visibly, at any rate. And here he was—frightened, for all the world to see. . . . I say 'all the world.' Perhaps I'm wrong. I saw it as clear as daylight, but then I know my man. It was so grievous, Betty. The impulse to go and touch him and talk about something else was almost irresistible. Anything on earth—anything to drive that hunted look out of his eyes. . . . But I had to sit impotently by, pretending to read. I feel I must do something, but what can I do? I wish to God you were here. I can't trust myself to write more than I have about his wife. You'll find her and her future in the New Testament. 'Where their worm dieth not. . . .'*

The hotel was crowded, but Joan and her uncle and aunt kept to themselves. The Carey Belows, however, were soon in the thick of things. Within three days the lady had established a Court of which the most favoured members were married men. Peregrine danced with their wives, waited outside the hairdresser's, reserved tables

and cabs, and was reviled night and morning for his pains. Joan was spared the spectacle of the daily drubbings, because those rites were always performed in secret, but she had pieced together the rubric of Peregrine's life, and to fill such gaps as there were was only too simple. The man's demeanour alone. . . . Peregrine hangdog! Joan's blood boiled. Besides, she had a maid, and so had Mrs. Below. As luck would have it, both hailed from Camden Town. The rest was easy. The rubric was hideously verified, monstrously annotated. Joan began to see red.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What have you done about your dress?"

"D'you mean for to-night?" said Peregrine.

Mrs. Carey Below sat back in her chair.

"What d'you think I mean?" she said.

"My dress for the dance, of course. It was very stupid of me."

"No, not stupid," said Mrs. Below. "Ill-mannered. Rather than take the trouble to use your brain, you'll let me spoon-feed it. Never mind. What have you done?"

"I haven't done anything," said Peregrine, "so far. But——"

"Why not?"

"Well, it's not till to-night, dear. I suppose Pickford can knock me out something this afternoon."

"Does it occur to you that I may need Pickford's services—this afternoon?"

Peregrine waved a desperate hand.

"If you want them you'll have them, of course. I only meant——"

"You're very kind," said his wife, with a metallic laugh. "D'you really mean that I can make use of my own maid?" She tapped the floor with her foot. "Of course, this is too handsome. Never mind. Supposing I am so reckless as to accept your offer—what are you going to do about your dress?"

"I won't go," said Peregrine. "I don't want to go. Masked balls aren't much in my line, and——"

"I never knew any entertainment that was," said Mrs. Below sweetly. "Not to put too fine a point upon it, you're about the most effective wet blanket I've ever seen."

"I realise that," said Peregrine bitterly. "That's largely why I don't want to go."

"I see," said Mrs. Below. "And what if I need you? Supposing I'm taken ill, or something like that." She silenced his protest with a shrug. "You see? Your



convenience again, as opposed to mine. Instinctively, yours comes first. Never mind. For Heaven's sake don't let's discuss it. For the third and last time—what are you going to do about your dress?"

"I'll buy one," said Peregrine wildly.

Instantly the merciless point rose to his throat.

"Where?"

"Oh, I'll find some place."

"Rot!" The word left her mouth like the crack of a whip. Mrs. Carey Below was getting angry. "This isn't Paris. You can't buy dominoes like jujubes. They don't sell them by the pound."

"I know," said Peregrine quietly. "I'm very sorry, dear. If you could spare me Pickford for half an hour. . . ."

"I must. You've forced my hand. *My* dress must go by the board, while yours is made." She raised her voice. "Pickford!"

The bedroom door opened, and the maid came in.

"Did you call, madam?"

"Mr. Below has nothing to wear to-night. He will get the material, and you must make him a dress. How many yards do you want?"

Pickford considered.

Then—

"Six, madam, single width, or three double."

Her mistress addressed Peregrine.

"D'you hear?" she demanded.

"Yes, but I don't understand. What is a single width?"

"They'll know in the shop."

"All right," said Peregrine. "What's the stuff called?"

Humanity was insisting that Pickford should intervene.

"I can easily go, madam. Now that I've done your dress—"

"That will do," said her mistress, bristling.

Pickford withdrew.

As the door closed—

"She's gone," said Mrs. Below. "You can take off that martyred air. Of course it's a wonderful card to have up one's sleeve—if one wants to get off with servants. They love it."

Her husband ignored the insult.

"What stuff shall I get?" he said.

"Any blamed stuff," said his wife.

"D'you want me to dry-nurse you? I shouldn't say you want it for a domino, or they'll think you're out of your mind. Say you want it for a shroud—they'll believe

that. . . . Just as a matter of interest, can you look cheerful? Or have you lost the knack?"

"I've lost the knack," said Peregrine.

"Our marriage has been a failure, and——"

"Whose fault is that?"

Peregrine shrugged his shoulders and rose to his feet.

"Mine, I suppose," he said, with a ghost of a laugh.

"Oh, you darling," said his wife.

Peregrine shuddered.

"I wish you wouldn't talk like that, Marion."

His wife stared.

"You wish I wouldn't—what do you mean?" Peregrine stood silent. "You'd better pull yourself together, hadn't you?"

Peregrine sought the door.

"I'll go and get the stuff," he said shakily.

"Stop!" Mrs. Below's voice was vibrating with passion. "I'm not going to try to teach you manners, because it's waste of time: but you said just now that entertainments weren't in your line. Well, kindly remember that lectures aren't in mine—even when delivered by imitation wash-outs. I can stand an undertaker—in his place: I can even bear Little Lord Fauntleroy: but a cross between the two *on his hind legs* is just a shade too thick even for me."

For a moment her husband hesitated, pale-faced.

Then he opened the door and passed out.

\* \* \* \* \*  
That Miss Atlee's maid should sit and talk with Pickford while the latter was doing her work was natural enough, and when she produced some silk to make a frill for the hood of Peregrine's gown Mrs. Below's maid was delighted with the attention.

"It'll give the ole long-cloth a flip," explained Miss Mason. "Won' look so much like a shroud. There's enough for a pair o' cuffs too, while we're about it."

Two hours later she reported to Joan that Peregrine might be known by his frill and his cuffs.

"You can't mistake them, miss. It isn't likely as there'll be another gentleman there with silk on a long-cloth gown, but if there was, you'll be sure to know the silk. It's a bit that was left over from linin' your ermine coat."

"Right," said Joan. "Thank you. What time do we unmask?"

"Not before midnight, miss."

"I imagine dancing will start about half-past ten."



Mason was, as they say, very quick in the uptake.

"Mrs. Below's maid is ordered for ten o'clock: but that means nothin', miss. Still, you never know. If you come upstairs at ten, that'll give me time to dress you, an' then I can slip off to their floor an' watch them daown. Then you'll know where you are, miss."

"All right, Mason. Thank you."

So it fell out that evening that the Carey Belows descended the great staircase with Joan Purchase Atlee a dozen steps behind. . . .

They reached the painted ball-room in the same order.

To identify Mrs. Below required but a nodding acquaintance with that lady's way of life. Her domino eclipsed all others as the moon the stars. It was of cloth of silver, freckled with pips of gold. She was out for blood to-night. To be outstanding in disguise, to beggar all concealment, to blaze—a glowing houri in a shoal of ghosts. . . . Such was her dream. Be sure it was realised. Her progress was one long triumph. As she entered the ball-room her courtiers swarmed about her, pleading the favour of a dance.

Peregrine slid to one side and got his back to the wall. . .

The spectacle was fantastic, suggesting the practice of mysteries which might be evil. It was the hour of counterfeit. Hooded and cloaked and masked, Secrecy whirled and flitted, finger to lip. Whispers and stifled laughter, red mouths and shining feet, white wrists upon hidden shoulders were mocking Truth. Broad shafts of coloured light, the only luminants, ranged to and fro over the company. Robed as familiars of the Inquisition, a cunning orchestra lent scene and music alike a devilish air.

"Well, Perry, won't you ask me to dance?"

The man started violently.

"Who are you?" he breathed, taking cool fingers in his and sliding an arm about a yielding waist.

As they slid into the fox-trot—

"I oughtn't to tell you really, but as we're such old friends. . . I'm Joan Atlee—that was."

Peregrine's heart gave one tremendous bound.

For a moment he said nothing, dancing mechanically and trying to find his voice.

Then—

"How on earth you knew me I can't

conceive, but it was. . . very handsome of you. . . to come up and speak—Joan."

"Steady," said Joan, wondering if he would notice the way her heart was pounding against her ribs. "There's something you ought to know. We were engaged once, and you—you broke it off." She felt his frame quiver. "If you'd waited another day, you'd never have written at all."

"Why?"

"Because I'd written to you, Perry, turning you down. My letter wasn't posted, so I took it and tore it up. I'm not very proud of myself, but I feel better now."

The lie sailed straight to its mark.

"I'm—I'm so awfully glad you did, Joan." Peregrine's voice was trembling.

"At least—you know what I mean?"

"I know, my dear, I know. You needn't explain to me." For an instant the hand on his shoulder rested less lightly. "The sea doesn't run so high when you're not alone in the boat."

The pregnant saying sank into Peregrine's brain like molten lead. Its poignant pertinence, the old, dead fellowship it brought to life, the hint it held of an acquaintance with grief, lightened his darkness with three dazzling beams.

"Oh, Joan, I'm so—so thankful we've met," he stammered lamely enough.

Joan thrilled to her core.

"You're not half as thankful as I am, Perry," she said. "We may have tired of each other—or thought we did—but at least we understood."

"By Jove, yes," said the man violently.

They danced the length of the chamber in eloquent silence.

Then—

"You know I'm married, Perry?" said Joan in a low voice.

"Only from what you said a moment ago."

"Well, I am. We won't mention his name—for reasons which will appear: but I'm going to tell you about him because I *must*." Her tone sank to a whisper tense and vibrant. "I've bottled it up, Perry"—the man started, and the clasp of the cool fingers became a grip—"till I'm nearly out of my mind. Think what it means to have no confidant—not a single soul to talk to who can ever begin to understand. . . I drove over here from San Sebastian, praying for death by the way. . . I came to find a *confidant*—some stranger that I could talk to, under the mask, and then—then I saw you."

Peregrine felt rather dazed.



"Let's get outside," he said uncertainly.

They made their way through the press, across the echoing hall and on to the terrace without.

This was silent and starlit, cool with the faint crush of breakers, full of the airs and graces of the summer night.

As they sat down—

"Tell me about him," said Peregrine.

The girl leaned back in her chair and cupped her chin in her palm.

"I often wonder," she said, "what made me marry him. Some evil spirit, I suppose. . . . I wasn't a prisoner then. He is so very obviously not my style. But for some strange reason or other I fell in love with him, Perry, and before I knew where I was the damage was done." She sighed. "So much for me. . . . He married me for my money and because a wife—in her place—can be a convenient thing. He soon had me in my place. . . ."

She threw back her head there, to stare at the stars. Presently she continued dreamily.

"I've many failings, Perry, but I'll tell you one of my worst—I *loathe* a row. . . . It's a very perilous failing, because you're at the mercy of the person who finds it out. . . . Well, that's how my downfall began. Rather than have unpleasantness, however just my case, I always gave way—with the inevitable result that now I've lost the very knack of moral courage, while the unpleasantness I sought to avoid has become the feature of my life."

She paused there, to steal a glance at the man. Peregrine was staring straight ahead, his hands clenching the arms of his wicker chair.

Joan proceeded steadily.

"I said that he wasn't my style. That's putting it rather low. He's rather like a tiger, while I'm like a poodle-dog. . . . He's a brilliant, striking personality—swift, heartless and unearthly strong. Women go mad about him: men dislike him—but they always give him the wall. Wherever he goes he dominates. It isn't force of will, because it's effortless: he never makes up his mind to get his own way—he just takes it, always, no matter at whose cost. But he—he never pays. . . . Well, if that's his way with the world, you can imagine, Perry, how far the poodle gets. . . . But that's not all. I've come—it's very natural—I've come to irritate him. . . ."

She sighed heavily, and a dreary, hopeless note slid into her voice.

"You've seen a leaf on the road before the

wind. Well, I'm like a leaf on a road—the open road of life. A dry, shrivelled leaf before the north-east wind. The wind's pitiless—devils the wretched leaf from pillar to post, never gives it a second's rest. And the road's open, and the leaf. . . . can't get away. . . ."

There was a long silence.

At length—

"Why," said Peregrine hoarsely, "why can't the leaf get away?"

Joan threw up her hands.

"I knew you'd say that," she said. "It does seem strange, doesn't it—that the leaf shouldn't be able to get away? Well, Perry, you'll hardly believe me, but it's a matter of pluck. The door's open—I've only got to walk out. *But I can't do it.*"

"D'you mean. . . . you love him?"

"Love him?" cried Joan. "Does the leaf love the north-east wind? Of course, it's different for you because you're a man. Women can be very trying, but they can't reduce men to pulp. So you can't put yourself in my place. But if you were a slave and your master had given you hell day in day out for five long, frightful years—well, d'you think you'd love him, Perry?"

Peregrine stared upon the ground.

"Have you—a child?" he said.

Joan shook her head.

"Has he control of your fortune?"

"Not a cent. I tell you," she added wildly, "the door's open."

"Steady, dear, steady. . . . Tell me, d'you feel—d'you feel you oughtn't to leave him? I mean. . . . D'you feel it's your job to stay—because you're his wife?"

"No, indeed," cried the girl. "I feel it's my job not—not to go to anyone else. It sounds rather out-of-date, but I've got old-fashioned views. He's my husband: and neither time nor distance can alter that. But I don't feel bound to stay with him—until he sends me mad. Would you feel bound. . . . Perry?"

"Good God, no!" The man flung out the words. "As you say you needn't. . . . Besides, I should think you're fed up with men. I—I should be." Joan winced. "Give me my freedom. . . . I'd only get into a hole—some wretched, back-stair lodging in some tiny place where I could sit and read. I'd have one servant, and I'd potter about the streets. I wouldn't want any excitement—I'd 've had enough of that." He laughed bitterly. "I only



want"—he swallowed and corrected his tense—"I'd only want peace, Joan."

The girl nodded her head.

"I knew you'd understand, Perry."

The man sat back in his chair.

"The door's open, Joan. Why can't you walk out?"

"Because," said the girl slowly, "because I haven't the nerve." She paused there, wide-eyed, as though plunged in bitter meditation. After a moment she continued absently. "There's nothing on earth to stop me, but I know that for me to leave him would be *against his will*, and I can't stand up against that."

"But he needn't know, Joan. You can just fade away and never see him again."

"I know," said Joan wearily. "I've got it all worked out. It's the easiest thing in the world. We leave for Paris to-morrow"—Peregrine started—"by the evening train. Separate starters, of course: he likes plenty of room. I've only to leave the train at some station during the night. . . We've taken rooms at Paris—I took them, of course. When he gets there he finds awaiting him a letter to say I've gone. . . It adds that *so long as he doesn't molest me* a thousand pounds a quarter will be paid into his account, but that if he tries to find me the allowance will stop. . . It's the easiest thing on earth. I worked it out months ago, and I've had chance after chance, for we're always moving about. But I can't do it, Perry. He's broken my nerve."

Peregrine set his teeth.

"I know what you mean, Joan. But——"

"No, you don't, Perry. No one who's not been through it could ever understand. Why should one *need* any nerve to step out of hell? That's all it is. Hell can't follow—won't even try to follow. There's nothing to fear. I've everything to gain and I can't lose. But I can't take the plunge. . . 'But there *is* no plunge,' you'd say. I know. But then your soul's your own. Mine isn't my own, Perry. . . And that's why you can't understand."

"I—do—understand."

"How can you?"

"Never mind how I can. I do." The strong, almost stern tone lifted up Joan's heart. The flax was smoking. "You're under a sort of spell—that's all it is."

"All?"

"All. Your words betray you. Your

soul, you say, isn't your own. That's pure fantasy—it must be. You're under no physical restraint, and you're mentally free. You can think out your way of escape—discuss it with me. You couldn't do that if your soul wasn't your own. You're not even hypnotised. But because for years you've been hammered you think that you can't hit back. The bare idea staggers you." He leaned forward and set a hand on her arm. "*But you haven't got to hit back*, Joan. Do get that into your head. Slipping out of the ring while he's sleeping isn't hitting him back."

Joan began to tremble.

"But after, Perry, *after*. . . . Supposing——"

The grip on her arm tightened.

"There'd be no 'after,' dear. The spell 'd be broken. As you stood on the platform and watched the train's lights fading, your confidence 'd come back pelting. You'd want to shout and sing. You'd wonder why on earth you'd stuck it so long. You'd find yourself laughing to think what a fool you'd been. You could afford to laugh, because you'd be free—*free*."

Joan put a hand to her head.

"It's the plunge," she whimpered. "It's taking the plunge, Perry. I'm afraid. If I'd someone to hold my hand. . . You know what I said just now. The sea doesn't run so high when you're not alone in the boat."

Peregrine pushed back his hood and wiped his face. This was streaming with sweat.

"Could—could you take the plunge with me, Joan?"

Joan started violently.

"With you, Perry? What d'you mean?"

"I mean, if I held your hand. You see, *you're not alone*, Joan. . . not—alone—in the boat."

"Perry!"

Trembling with excitement, the man continued jerkily.

"All you've said of yourself you might have been saying of me. I'm in the same boat, Joan. I've been there for seven years. And I haven't the nerve to plunge—either. I can preach, but I can't practise. But I think I might save myself if I tried to save you."

Joan clapped her hands to her cheeks.

"Oh, Perry, I'm frightened," she breathed. "Supposing he——"

"He'll be asleep," said Peregrine.



"Listen. We get to Bordeaux about one. Bordeaux's the place. Come out of your sleeper there. I'll—I'll be in the corridor. We must let our big baggage go." The sweat was running on his forehead. Impatiently he wiped it off. "Write your letter to Paris the moment you're back."

With a bursting heart—

"You'll—you'll leave me on the platform, won't you? I mean. . . ." The girl was panting. "Not that I don't care, dear, but I wouldn't like. . . ."

"I—I swear," said the man uncertainly. Joan's brain staggered.

"We must—must play the game," she faltered, half to herself. Suddenly she caught at his arm. "Oh, Perry, you *will* be there? You won't let me down? If I came out of my sleeper, and you weren't there. . . ."

"I will be there."

Joan gave a little sob.

Then she looked up.

"I'm an awful funk," she quavered.

Peregrine rose and put her hand to his lips. He was quite calm now.

"Buck up, my lady," he said. "The sea's falling."

Joan's world rocked.

The trick had been done. The game was as good as played. The fallen sparrow was up—spreading its wings. Very soon now it would be out of sight. Only the decoy would be left—fallen on the ground. Only the decoy. . . .

Her own words flamed at her.

'The door's open—I've only got to walk out.'

It was, indeed, 'the easiest thing in the world.' One didn't need any nerve to step *into heaven*. Besides, he was her man—had always been. Already they'd lost seven years. . . .

Two figures loomed out of the shadows.

"The only objection to masks," purred a familiar voice, "is that if a wife should want her husband she can't find him."

With his back to the speaker, Peregrine stood like a rock.

"For my part," came the reply, "I should call it a virtue."

A provoking laugh answered him.

As the figures passed on, the mist lifted and Joan saw her path clear cut. 'He that hath clean hands. . . .' She was out to rescue, but not to rob.

"Let's go and dance once more," she said quietly. "Then I'll slip away."

Peregrine muffled his face, and they passed

back into the ball-room, the slam and stutter of ragtime and the slash of the coloured lights. . . .

As the dance ended—

"God bless you, Perry," breathed Joan. "It's—it's been like heaven. You—you *will* be there, dear?"

Peregrine smiled back.

"Buck up, my lady."

An instant later the girl was lost in the press.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some thirty-six hours had gone by.

Joan Purchase Atlee was nearing Biarritz, Peregrine was in a car heading for Havre, and Mrs. Carey Below was sitting in a Paris hotel, staring upon a letter, with her eyes aflame and her underlip caught in her teeth.

A second letter lay on the floor by her side, its single sheet crumpled as though in wrath.

By your leave, I will straighten it out.

Dear Marion,

*I have decided that we are better apart. If you will write to Forsyth, saying you accept this decision, he will send you a cheque for five hundred pounds, and, so long as you do not seek to avoid this decision, on application to Forsyth, one thousand pounds will be paid to you every quarter.*

Peregrine.

The second letter, though not the envelope, was in the same handwriting. Mrs. Below had dictated it—some seven years ago.

My dear Joan,

*This is rather a difficult letter to write, but I have come to the conclusion that it would be a fatal mistake for us to be married. We're friends, I know, but there must be something more than friendship if marriage is to be a success. Where there is no true understanding there can never be real happiness. I am sure that after a little you will see the force of my words and realise with me that I am taking the wisest, although by no means the easiest, course in asking you to release me from my engagement. If I don't hear from you I shall know that you agree.*

Yours very sincerely,

Peregrine Carey Below.

*P.S.—I think it best for both of us that we should not meet again, so I am leaving for London to-night.*

Mrs. Carey Below stared and stared.



Presently she glanced round, folded the letter swiftly and thrust it into her bag.

Out of sight, out of mind. . . Out of sight. . .

With an effort she wrenched at her thoughts, speaking mechanically to give her brain a lead

"So nothing," she rasped, breathing heavily through her nose, "*nothing* is sacred to him. This—after seven years. . . ." She raised her voice. "Pickford!"

But Pickford was in a taxi, heading for the Gare du Nord.

*Another complete story by Dornford Yates will appear in the next number.*



## DOORS OF THE HILLSIDE.

**T**HE firs that climb the hillside  
 With boles of rust and grey,  
 What reck they of the cares which throng  
 The close of the winter's day?  
 In their dark-cradling boughs a-swing,  
 The birds they harbour and keep,  
 And the tall pine-stem sighs over them:  
 God guard us through our sleep!

The birches of the moorside,  
 With stems of silver white,  
 What care they for the shadows grim  
 Which lurk at edge of night?  
 Their leaves' spent gold spins over the mould  
 Across the turfen floor,  
 To light the rim of the tarns grown dim:  
 God shield us evermore!

And all the trees of the hillside,  
 By burrow, holt, and brake,  
 Give store of food for the folk o' the wood,  
 And sanctuary make;  
 Hill-doors unfold, strayed ones to hold,  
 And into shelter take  
 The hunted and storm-stressed to rest:  
 God guard us till we wake!

ALICE E. GILLINGTON.



# FIVE YEARS OF COMMERCIAL FLYING

By HARRY HARPER,

*Technical Secretary of the Civil Aerial Transport Committee, and author of "The Steel Construction of Aeroplanes."*

THE "air express" between London and the Continent has just completed its fifth year. In this article, written by one associated intimately with the institution of the first London-Paris aeroplane service in 1919, and with general flying since 1907, the lessons learned during these first five years of commercial aviation, and the morals to be drawn from them, are analysed non-technically.

*Photographs by Percy G. Luck*

IT took thirty-five years to perfect the railway engine; twenty years were needed to develop the marine engine; and fifteen years were spent upon improvements in the motor-car,

It is facts like these we must bear in mind when, after only five years of commercial flying, we are apt to think that never has there been a transport problem so full of pitfalls, perplexities, and doubts as that of the establishment of civil aviation, and more especially of the fitting into its place, in our general scheme of transit, of the high-speed aeroplane.

For many years the writer, and others who saw the earliest historical beginnings of flight, have watched and made their deductions, trying to anticipate the trend of events in the development of flying machines as transport vehicles. Yet no one, no matter how sagacious, could have foreseen years ago that the first actual civil aviation services, instead of developing

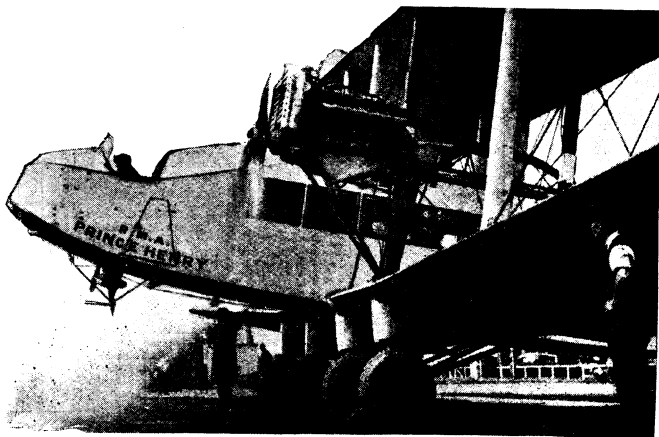
naturally in a peace-time progress, would be instituted hastily—one might say impetuously—on a great artificial wave of post-war enthusiasm, and with the employment of machines not designed at all as vehicles

of business transport, but as craft of great power and speed to meet the grim demands of war.

One must probe this fact and realise its significance, because it is here that one has the key to the situation. Had it not been for the War, with its abnormal

development of aviation in extreme directions, commercial flying would—during its pioneer phase—have been a slower, surer, and, from a business point of view, probably a far more satisfactory movement.

What happened really was that civil aerial transport, borne upwards on that great immediately post-war wave of optimism which rose sky-high, not only fell back with that wave when it receded, but found itself in a worse position than other industries, and this because, unlike older concerns, it



THE PILOT OF THE "AIR EXPRESS."

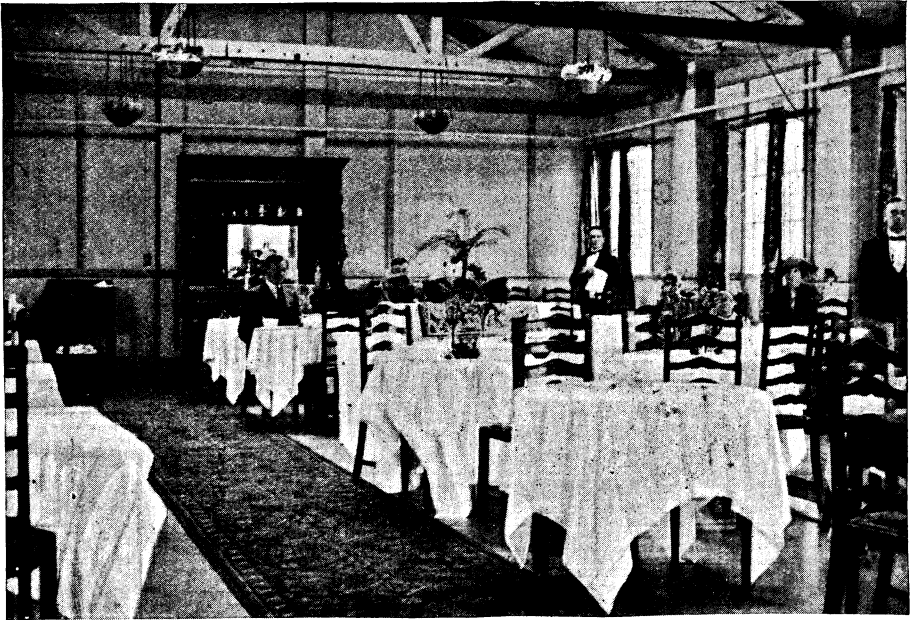
*In this photograph one of our Imperial Airways pilots, who are the finest in the world, has just taken his place in the cockpit of a big 14-passenger plane such as flies the 600 miles between London and Zurich, via Paris and Basle. The engines are running, whirling round the air-screws, and soon the machine will be cleaving its way through the sky.*



had no basis of experience, or of real enduring patronage, upon which it might weather through to better times. This, and exaggerated claims made for aeroplanes commercially, long before they were in a position to justify them, put civil aviation, during its earliest phase, in an artificially stimulated state. The position was inherently unsatisfactory, because commercial aviation made initial strides which were not based on business foundations. Progress, with machines of speed and power which were evolved for war flying and not for peace flying, was fundamentally uncommercial; and now to-day, optimism giving

bounding optimism, might have served its purpose well in the infancy of airways.

So far as the London-Paris service is concerned, it was, after its inception in August, 1919, not much more than an exciting novelty for travellers seeking thrills, just as some new show at an amusement park might attract attention and cause a large amount of comment. Genuine business travellers have, until fairly lately, been the exception rather than the rule on experimental airways. That this should be so is not surprising. The business man, when on business bent, cannot afford to make experiments with his mode of transport.



LUXURY ON THE AIRWAY.

*All the amenities of first-class travel are now provided at our big air-station at Croydon, the most perfectly equipped, both scientifically and from the viewpoint of comfort of passengers, in the world to-day. Here is seen the fine restaurant used by aerial travellers or by those awaiting friends who are arriving by air from abroad.*

place to reality, civil aerial transport is in the process of laying a sensible, business-like foundation which shall ensure unromantic but steady progress.

## II.

THERE were very conservative people who, in the early days of railways, declared that this new mode of transport would never be any good for passengers, and would serve merely for the transport of coal! Such an attitude was, of course, going to the very limit of caution; but something of that same conservative spirit, leavening a too

He must have a proved, established, well-conducted system—one that is adapted to his special needs, and does not fail him. And after certain early trials of the air service, made before it was in a position to provide the really business facilities it ensures to-day, the City man and merchant were inclined to fight shy of aerial transport. But that was merely a passing phase. Already, gaining experience, the airways are "delivering the goods" from a business point of view.

What commercial aviation has to do, to-day, is to live down its reputation as



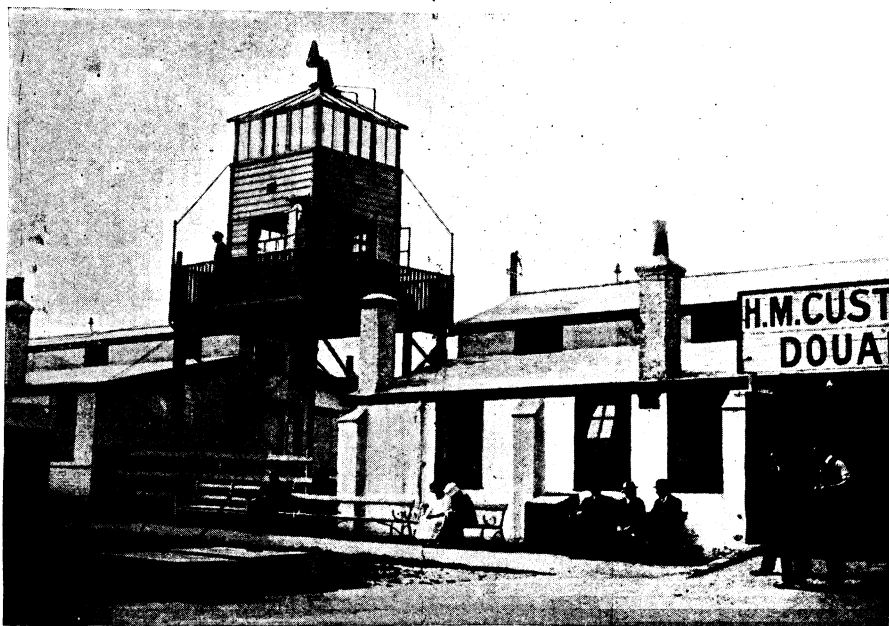


DEPARTURE OF THE "AIR EXPRESS."

*Here is seen a group of passengers about to take their places in the luxurious armchair seats of one of the great Imperial Airway saloon-planes which fly daily between London and the Continent. Already our Imperial machines cover some 1,600 miles of high-speed routes, and another 3,000 miles, including extensions to Constantinople and Rome, are in active organisation*

the world's newest wonder, and settle into an era of unspectacular business operation.

That it will do so nobody who knows the facts has a moment's doubt.



THE TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER.

*From this structure at the London air-station, where the look-out man who scans the sky can be seen on duty on the raised platform surrounding the tower, the aerial traffic officer controls the incomings and outgoings of the "air expresses" and cargo-planes. Here, too, are the switches operating the ground-lighting system which is employed when flying takes place at night.*



Our new £1,000,000 national aeroplane-operating company, Imperial Airways, is just getting into its stride. Receiving as it will—spread over ten years—£1,000,000 in subsidies from the Government, and being in a position, owing to its security of tenure, to formulate wise, far-seeing, constructive schemes, the establishment of this company represents a great turning point in British commercial aviation. It is fortunate in having Sir Eric Geddes as its chairman of directors, while its managing director is Colonel Frank Searle—a great expert on modern transport—who has done more than any other living man to lift

machines which carry business men in haste through from London to Berlin in nine hours are to be continued on to Moscow, which will be brought within thirty-six hours of London by air.

Facilities are becoming much better internationally for the extension of air-lines, passing over different countries, to be traversed daily by British machines with mails, passengers, and goods. Complications which have delayed progress on the great Orient express route are now disappearing, and one of the next big steps in British commercial flying will be the operation of a service of 105 miles-an-hour



CHECKING THE POSITION OF "AIR EXPRESSES" IN FLIGHT.

*Here, in the control-tower at Croydon, an official is seen examining the map of the Continental airways upon which, by means of wireless telephone messages, the position of aeroplanes is followed constantly from the moment they leave the ground. Little flags, each bearing its appropriate registration number, represent the aircraft which are inward or outward bound at 100 miles an hour, and the control officer, by a glance at the map, can ascertain at any moment the traffic position on any of the routes.*

civil aviation from an amateur, purely experimental stage and place it on a commercial, business-like, permanent footing.

Operating already some 1,660 miles of air-lines, Imperial Airways has plans in hand now for extensions which will add another 3,000 miles to its regularly-flown routes.

Leaving London at 10.15 a.m., passengers fly already through to Zurich, *via* Paris, arriving there at 6.45 p.m. the same day, and an extension from Zurich will soon take them down to Rome; while the

Napier D. H. aeroplanes right through from London to Constantinople, *via* Prague, Vienna, Budapest, and Sofia. That great trunk route will be further extended, link by link, until India is reached. It is the policy of Imperial Airways to organise each new stage completely, from both technical and commercial aspects, before another is begun.

Of capital importance, in the development of world air transport, is the Government decision to construct two vast airships, of a size greater than has been attempted



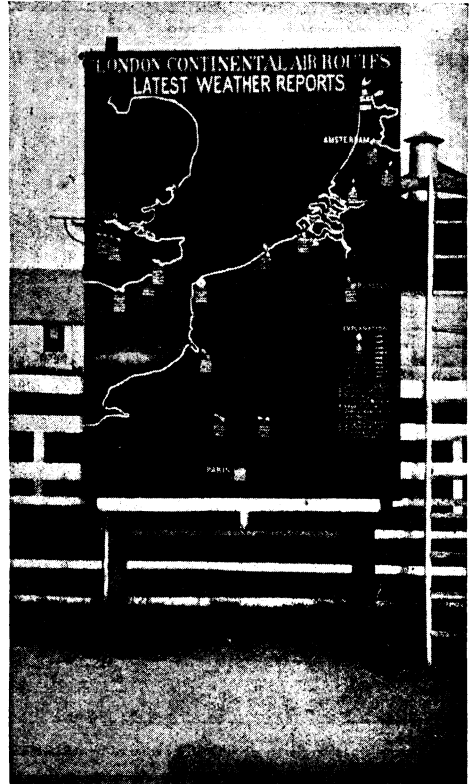
hitherto. One of these leviathans—each is to have a gas-capacity of 5,000,000 cubic feet—is to be built by the Air Ministry for experiments in long-range ocean reconnaissance and other purposes. The second is to be equipped throughout as a commercial craft, and will carry passengers on cruises along the great "All-Red" route between London and Australia. The development now indicated is for swift aeroplanes to act as "feeders" for great trans-ocean airship routes. Aeroplanes and airships will not compete with each other. They will work in together in a great world-scheme of aerial routes.

### III.

WHAT happened precisely after the War was this: rival firms raced each other to be first to start an air service between London and Paris. They had no commercial machines, but this did not deter them. They adapted war types and started with these. Such converted war machines had one characteristic which was due directly to their having been designed for war-service, in which "performance," speed, weight-carrying, and climb, are so important that they outweigh any question of economy or moderate engine-power. They flew, most of them, with extreme speed. This had an advantage on the London-Paris route, where winds are high, and the weather generally troublesome from an aviation point of view. The smallest and fastest of these converted war machines, for weeks after the service started, attained an average speed, while in transit between London and Paris, of more than one hundred miles an hour.

One thing, indeed, this Paris air service did prove, even in its earliest infancy, and that was the speed of commercial flying. Also the picked pilots employed, having such swift, powerful machines to handle, fought their way successfully, upon occasion, through winds rising to gale strength. In speed, in fact, and in wind-flying, the first war machines converted to civil use showed that they could do all that even the most enthusiastic advocate had claimed for them. But bad weather, on the London-Paris route, includes adverse conditions other than wind and rain. There are, for example, obstinate mists and fogs; and these have been from the first, and are still, a bugbear of pilots flying commercial aeroplanes. One cannot, for reasons of space, explain in detail why this should be so. Stripping

the question of technique, however, and sketching the root problem in a phrase, one may say it is because mists or fogs rob a pilot of vision that the element of risk—with machines which not only fly fast, but also alight comparatively fast—tends to become unreasonably high. A simple illustration may suffice. A pilot descending while *en route* to effect some mechanical adjustment can, as a rule, in clear weather, pick without difficulty a



WEATHER REPORTING ON THE AIRWAY.

Here is seen the notice-board at our "air Charing Cross," on which on official places the latest reports as to weather conditions on the flying routes which extend already from London to Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Berlin and Zurich. It is vital, before starting, that the pilots of "air expresses" should know what the weather is like ahead; while even when in flight, thanks to the wireless 'phone, they can now obtain instantly any further information they may require.

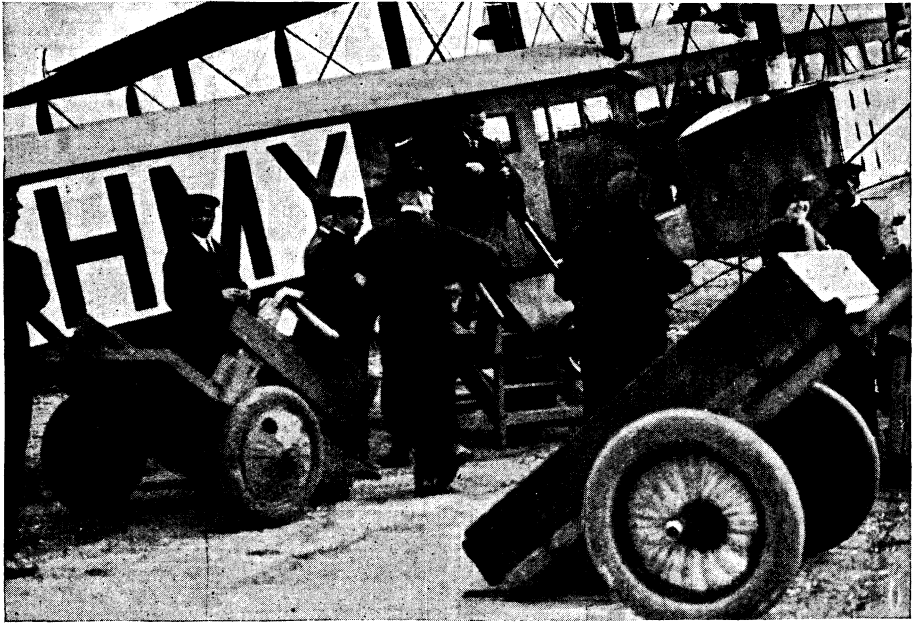
suitable alighting-point; but with the land obscured, the operation may become fraught with risk. In this regard our new airway "flying stock" will introduce fresh elements of safety. These machines will be able to alight more slowly than do any existing type of craft.

Again summarising, one may say that



by means of automatic stabilisers, turn-indicators, and other devices, science is now dealing with the risk of fog while a pilot is actually flying. Aero-engines are also becoming so reliable that the risk of an involuntary landing in misty weather is exceedingly remote. Big new passenger-craft and cargo-planes are also coming into use in which three separate engines are employed. As these machines will continue in flight, even when fully loaded, should any one of their three motors break down, this means a virtual immunity from forced landings through mechanical trouble. A problem remaining is the safe alighting of

to combat fog better than does earth transport, and will eventually suffer actually less delay from it than do trains or boats. But work in the scientific equipment of an airway is most costly. And even when one recognises how far Government-aided science has gone, there is a good deal of difference often between what is done experimentally and what can be relied upon absolutely in everyday, routine, commercial working. In any event, though, we should have patience with the airway, because it is, after all, dealing, so far as fog is concerned, with a problem which, even after all their years of operation, still upon



PASSENGERS ALIGHTING FROM THE PARIS LINE.

*Here travellers are seen emerging from the saloon of a big machine which has just arrived at the London air-station from the French capital. Not only is air transport so infinitely faster than earth transport, but its exhilaration is such that passengers make the London-Paris journey without any of the fatigue or boredom which are entailed by long, weary hours of boat and train.*

a machine at its destination should the landing-ground be mist- or fog-enshrouded. Here special lighting installations, and the use of electrically-charged ground cables which send up guiding signals to incoming aeroplanes, are already paving the way to practical success. What one may say truly to-day, looking back on the past five years, is that though flying has been interrupted in winter by mist and fog, there is every promise now that, by the use of perfected machines, equipment, and ground organisation, a fully-developed airway will be able

occasion demoralises both land and sea transport.

People have been far too impatient, as a matter of fact, with the airway in the important question of reliability in operation, though in this respect some air enthusiasts have really been to blame, because they have made such premature claims for the aeroplane, as a reliable vehicle, that a critical, captious attitude has been induced in many quarters. The flying machine, like any other new vehicle, has to pass through a probationary commercial



period. An organisation has to be built up and perfected; lessons have to be learned. How flying can be aided and safeguarded is proved already by the work which has been done in equipping commercial aeroplanes with wireless telephones, and in developing and perfecting a land organisation which will permit pilots to obtain from ground stations, while flying, up-to-date weather reports and other information which often make all the difference in the world between risk and safety.

During their first five years of operation our winged expresses have flown more than 4,000,000 miles. In the summer months they have been attaining a reliability figure of ninety-one per cent. Even with winter fogs to contend with, on the routes between London and the Continent, the all-the-year-round figure is as high already as eighty-eight per cent. This, remembering that organisation is now being improved constantly, disposes altogether of the contention that aeroplane transport cannot be made reliable.

Though it may be some little time, perhaps, before aerial transport is firmly on its feet financially, our airways have proved conclusively that the commercial aeroplane is more than twice as swift in movement as the fastest earth transport, and is likely to remain so. And this sheer speed of the flying machine, once such speed is commercialised, becomes a critically important asset. The world's demand is for greater speed in transport. That demand is, in fact, growing more insistent every day; and the flying machine provides an answer to the cry which no other vehicle on land or sea can provide. Once established, with its experimental difficulties overcome, air transport is, therefore, practically certain of success, merely



PASSING THROUGH THE CUSTOMS AT THE AIR-STATION.

*Here a group of Continental air travellers are seen at the Customs office at the London air-station. All such formalities are accomplished with a smooth rapidity which is in keeping with the super-speed movement of the winged expresses which devour distance at 100 miles an hour.*

because of its unique claims in actual speed of movement.

Another definite fact established in airway working is what one may call the human efficiency and general routine capability of pilots who fly the hundred miles an hour "air expresses." In all weathers they have acquitted themselves magnificently, and they have shown also—and it is a very important fact from the viewpoint of impending commercial developments—that with suitable intervals of rest they can go on piloting their machines up and down "airways" with a striking absence of those signs of nerve-strain which were in early days reckoned an almost inevitable accompaniment of high-speed aerial navigation.

#### IV.

SUCH facts as these are, cumulatively, of more than ordinary significance. You have it proved that a commercial aeroplane can actually transport loads through the air at an average everyday speed as high as one hundred miles an hour, and that no bad weather, save obstinate, widespread mist and fog, can—even in the present stage of organisation—prevent a pilot getting through. You have it shown also that you can go on operating an airway, even in the infancy of such a means of transport, with an encouraging and—looking impartially over any appreciable

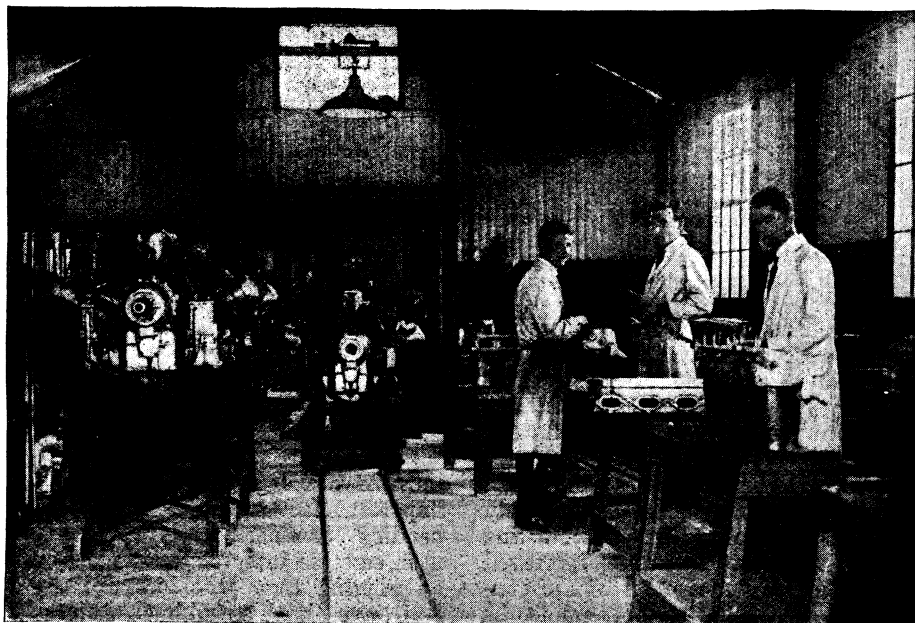


period of time—significant lack of any mishaps such as suggest a fundamental, irremediable peril of the air.

It is no good trying to bring forward figures comparing experimental air transport with well-established earth transport from the point of view of safety in operation. With the air, so far—apart from the fact that its mileages and passenger loads are insignificant compared with the ramifications of a widely-developed earth transport—you have an absolutely pioneer undertaking.

All, in fact, that commercial flying needs to answer to-day is the indictment of

Over a route hardly organised at all then, from the viewpoint of safety precautions, and with everything to learn and extremely bad weather to combat, this first year's service was conducted day by day, covering a total of more than 300,000 miles at the extreme speed of 100 miles an hour, with only one serious accident; and in that specific case, in which a machine, flying low in a fog which it had encountered suddenly over the Surrey hills, had the ill-luck to strike the top of a tree, the disaster was of an essentially preventable kind. This specific risk has, in fact, already been overcome, because to-day, every machine being



THE "HEART" OF THE AEROPLANE.

*It has been said truly that its engine is the "heart" of the aeroplane, and here is seen one of the finely-organised repair shops in which Imperial Airway experts overhaul the great "Lion" engines which drive the swiftest of our winged expresses. The scientific maintenance system, inaugurated by Colonel Frank Searle, managing director of Imperial Airways, enables British commercial planes to fly with a wonderful absence of any mechanical trouble.*

adverse critics that it is inherently dangerous. Farther than that, at the moment, we are not called upon to go. Until an airway is as fully organised as is, say, a railway, direct comparisons with earth transport are misleading.

The most convincing instance in the writer's personal knowledge of the fact that the passage of a machine through the air is not attended by the lurking peril too often assumed, was provided in the very first purely experimental twelve months' working of the London-Paris daily "air express."

equipped with the wireless telephone, a pilot is in such close touch with the ground stations while aloft that he can safeguard himself against flying without warning into any sudden patch of bad weather.

Again, though air transport statistics cannot as yet be taken as more than generally illustrative, there is another figure one is well entitled to quote as dealing a death-blow to the prejudiced declaration that immediately aeroplanes attempted to carry passengers regularly in all sorts of weather, the accident roll would become high.



That figure is this: During the first absolutely critical 1,000,000 miles of "air express" flying between London and the Continent, when the eyes of the world were on this new enterprise, and pilots, naturally eager to maintain a good average of efficiency, set off sometimes in weather the imperfect state of the land organisation hardly justified them in risking, there were only two accidents, in the ceaseless daily operation of the airway, which involved loss of life to passengers. In the first of these—already mentioned—one air traveller was killed, and in the second two. As organisation improves, the factor of safety grows steadily better. During their five years of daily operation our airways have carried nearly 50,000 passengers, and only six of these have lost their lives. This is a conclusive answer to the question: "Can flying be made safe?" It can.

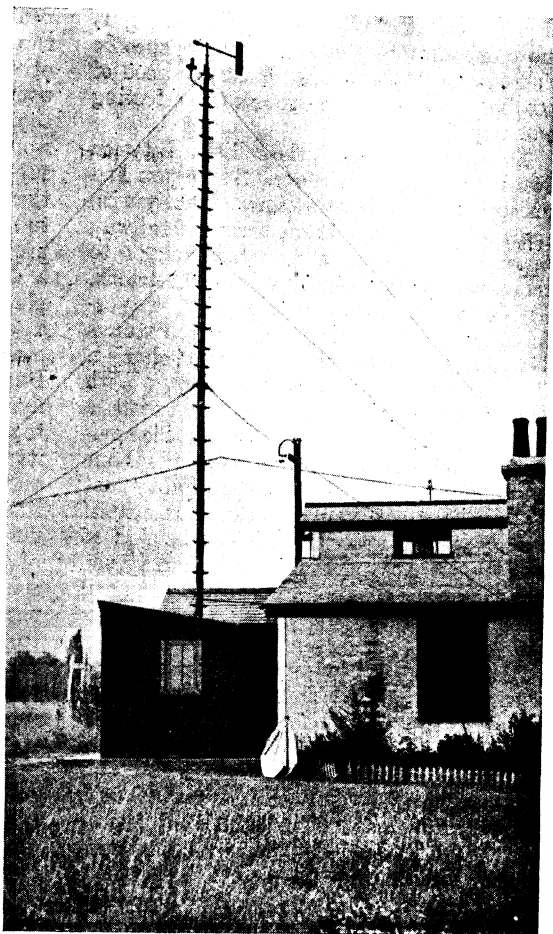
The growth of aerial transport is shown strikingly by the table herewith, which gives round figures for passengers air-borne in and out of Croydon air-station during corresponding weeks in our first five years:—

Year.	Passengers.
1919 .....	20
1920 .....	200
1921 .....	400
1922 .....	500
1923 .....	700
1924 .....	1,000

Air accidents which do take place—and which are reported, owing to their novelty, under conspicuous headlines—naturally impress the public mind. But a detailed review of the five years' working of the London-Paris route—and one concentrates on this because it shows commercial aviation in its most advanced form to-day—proves without any shadow of doubt that were the alleged inherent perils as great as nervous critics have assumed, then it would have been literally impossible to have flown all these miles with an accident list as small as it has been.

#### V.

THE general position being as it is, one does not in the least minimise the seriousness of such airway "crashes" as have taken place. But that there would be accidents—that, in



RECORDING THE STRENGTH OF THE WIND.

*The wind-gauge, mounted on the top of this mast at the air-station, registers from moment to moment the force at which the wind is blowing, and pilots of air-expresses and goods-planes, entering the little shed at the foot of the mast, can see a visual record of the actual strength of gusts.*

fact, there must be accidents—in the institution of such a new means of transport, was inevitable. It was the price paid for human progress. An examination of the history of the introduction of other modes of transport shows much the same preliminary conditions. Where aerial transport would be in a serious position would be if, after an expert examination of such accidents as have taken place, one had to confess: "We really do not see how they can be prevented from happening again, even when we have applied every improvement we have in mind."

But there is no fear whatever now, nor has there been from the first, of reaching any such position in regard to the navigation



of the air. On the contrary, nothing is more encouraging than the way any specific risk can be dealt with, or means devised of dealing with it, in the process of perfecting our organisation.

Take, as an example, the collision between two machines over France. There you had an accident comparable almost exactly with some of the risks which arose in railway operation as soon as it was sought to increase the first small volume of traffic. On a railway, however, to-day, a perfected, smooth-working organisation stands between the passenger and any such risk. And so on the perfected airway. With the division of traffic streams, with a greater perfection in the use of scientific navigation instruments and wireless telephone communication, and with an ability not only to separate lines of traffic, but also, if necessary, to prescribe different heights at which certain classes of machines shall fly, the dangers of air collisions can be reduced until they are as negligible as are similar risks in perfected land or sea transport.

One other outstanding airway accident during the period under review merits special attention because it attracted so much public attention. This was the case in which a small, specially-swift "air express," on its way from London to Paris, was seen to be in some sort of difficulty when just beyond Folkestone on its cross-Channel passage. The pilot apparently turned and performed one or two unaccountable evolutions, after which the craft plunged nose foremost into the water, with the loss of the lives of its two passengers and also of the aviator in charge. There being thus no survivors to bear testimony, and an expert technical inquiry leading to no definite results, the theory generally accepted was that the pilot had been overcome by some sudden illness while in the air, and had, as a result, lost control of his machine. The matter has special interest because, as a sure and certain means of eliminating any such risk in future, Continental airways provide the larger types of "expresses" with an assistant engineer-pilot, who sits always beside the airman who is actually handling the machine. By this precaution, should the pilot-in-charge fall a victim to any sudden indisposition, the qualified assistant can immediately assume control of the machine.

A similar process of eliminating by experience the risks arising in an entirely new method of travel is at work in con-

nection with the engine-plants which drive the flying expresses. In this respect, as in others, the aeroplane has triumphed already over adverse criticism. It was declared, as soon as daily flying began, that machines would be delayed constantly, and passengers subjected to all sorts of dangers, through the breaking down of motors and the need to make forced landings. In complete disproof of this I have before me, as I write, a detailed record of the first experimental phase of the pioneer London-Paris service—a service which was making commercial aerial history with almost every flight. During the very first spell of 50,000 miles flying, when there was literally everything to learn, and the organisation was groping its way through constantly-arising problems, only three of the daily journeys were interfered with in any way by mechanical defects arising while in flight; and in two of these three instances, after alighting for a few minutes to make a small adjustment, the pilot was in the air again and able to complete his journey. This, it must be remembered, was in the very first and most testing period. Since then, with perfections in the installation of aero-engines, and in their overhaul and upkeep while on the ground, the factor of unreliability has been so reduced that day after day and week after week the journeys between London and the Continent are effected with the regularity of a railway express. There is also, as I have already indicated, the coming phase of the three-engined aeroplane to eliminate, to all intents and purposes, the need for any involuntary descent.

## VI

OF extreme importance is the era, just dawning, of night-flying on the airways.

First to be tested with mails and express goods, the operation of night-flying passenger-planes will soon be a regular feature of European air travel. Atmospheric conditions at night are frequently more favourable than by day, and with specially-designed beacons and landing-lights already in existence, and with scientific aids to navigation now forthcoming, the running of an airway by night, given the practical immunity from breakdown afforded by such engine-plants as I have mentioned, becomes a feasible and, from a commercial point of view, most valuable undertaking.

There is promise already of an important express air-goods traffic by night between London and Continental cities, the scheme

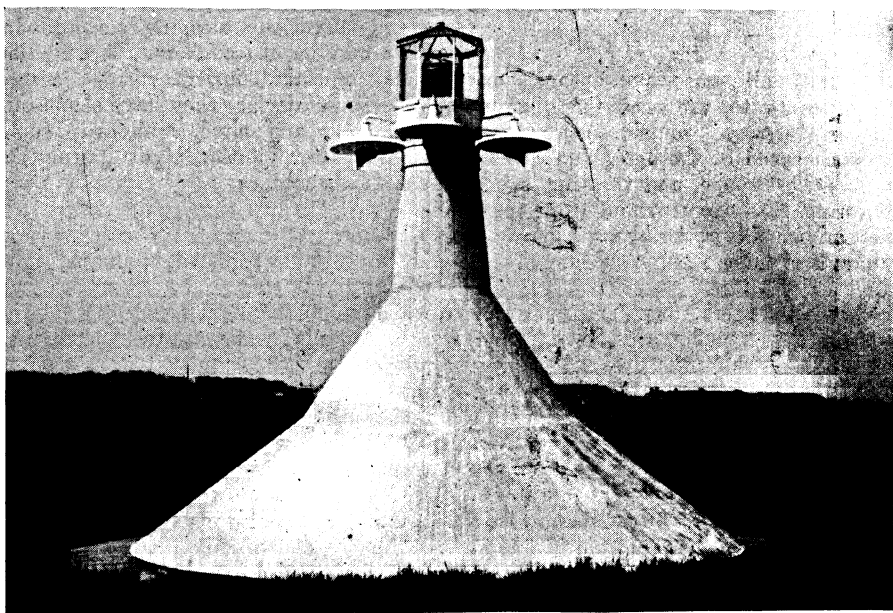


being to collect by fast motor-vans in London just at the time business houses close for the day, to transport this urgent merchandise to the air-station at Croydon, and to carry it through the night by air to foreign centres in ample time for it to be delivered at the hour of the opening of business establishments next morning. With the use of large, specially-designed cargo-planes, such services can be offered at rates providing an attractive and business-like facility to the commercial world.

One of the most important of the new schemes is for urgent mails for the Continent, from Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Newcastle,

posted in Glasgow after business hours in the evening will have been air-borne a thousand miles to Berlin in time for delivery there by lunch-time next day.

As to the night passenger "air express," business men are already expressing their approval of one scheme on the point of realisation. This is to run a fast machine from Paris to London, and another from London to Paris, just after dinner each evening. This would mean that a business man could do a full day's work, say, in London, dine as usual in the evening, catch the night "air express" to Paris, arrive at the Paris air-station a couple of hours later,



THE CONE-LIGHT AT CROYDON.

*This is used as a distinctive sign to guide air-pilots at night. Powerful lights, shining from above, illuminate brilliantly the cone-shaped structure or shape, and airmen can see it from long distances away as a very distinctive triangular-shaped patch of light, which cannot be confused with other lights.*

to be flown down during the night to our "air Charing Cross," descents being made to pick up intermediate bags at Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield. Reaching Croydon in the early hours of the morning, the mails will be transferred to Continental planes, and rushed over to Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam in time for delivery at the commencement of business hours that same morning. This will mean that great Continental districts are brought as near our manufacturing centres, from a mail-transport point of view, as are cities within this country. An air-mail letter

and be in bed in Paris at a normal time, ready to get up next morning for a fresh day of affairs, without having encroached in any way upon his usual working hours. It is such developments as these, now impending, which, when they are in existence universally throughout Europe, will put an entirely fresh complexion upon the strictly commercial possibilities of the 100-miles-an-hour airway.

With larger and more luxurious machines, built of metal, with the opening up of great through routes, traversing Europe from north to south and east to west, and with the



regular introduction of connecting services, operating by night as well as day, the "amateur" phase of flying will pass away.

One of the most important aspects of the new era will be the development of a large and regular goods traffic to augment on the airway, as it does on the railway, the purely passenger traffic. Here already one of our most promising features is the growth in air-borne merchandise. Recently the sheds at the London air-station contained more than thirty tons of goods waiting for air-dispatch, while during a single week, not long ago, forty-three tons of cargo were air-borne in and out of London. Air-freight traffic is now expected to grow until it provides a large and constant source of revenue.

#### VII.

EVERYTHING, all our five years' experience, points to the need for opening up longer "airway" routes, so that the tremendous speed of the aeroplane can be given its fullest scope, and the time spent on motoring passengers to and from aerodromes can be made up for by swift journeys of hundreds of miles when once they are in the air.

Already passengers, and more particularly business passengers, are showing their appreciation of the immense time-saving effected by really long connecting routes. Rushing through the air at 100 miles an hour, and keeping it up hour after hour, and during the night as well as by day, the aeroplane express will soon revolutionise travel, and reduce journeys which now last days to a period to be measured in hours.

The indications now—as foreshadowed by Air Vice-Marshal Sir Sefton Brancker, our Director of Civil Aviation—are for long-distance airway traffic to be divided into three classes. First will come super-speed travel for business passengers in great haste. "Air expresses" employed for this purpose will attain speeds of 140 or 150 miles an hour, and special rates will be charged. Machines like this will reach Rome, from London, in about eight hours, or Madrid in seven and a half hours. Then will come a more normal class of passenger transport at 100 miles an hour, and a service of big cargo-planes flying at about sixty miles an hour.

From the point of view of travelling comfort, astonishing strides are being made. At first cramped, as he was, in tiny improvised cabins, the aerial traveller in the latest machines sits in a large, draught-proof

saloon, with wide side-windows from which he can view the panorama of land, sea, and air. His armchair is luxurious, the noise of the engine is silenced, and whenever he feels so disposed he can touch a bell and an attendant will serve him with refreshments. Such progress is really wonderful when you remember that it is only five years since those first crude converted war machines began to fly commercially.

In new flying stock some machines are to be so large that meals can be served while in flight, as in the restaurant car of an express train; while on the Moscow-Berlin line small aerial sleeping-cars are already in experimental use, and will be followed by big machines for regular night-flying, providing luxurious sleeping accommodation for a number of travellers. It is significant that official couriers using aeroplane "sleepers" declare they have slept soundly and well, and have awakened much refreshed after pioneer night journeys with urgent dispatches.

#### VIII.

It may be permitted, perhaps, now to recapitulate the main questions which, when commercial flying began five years ago, it was agreed must be answered in the affirmative before the "airway" could be said to be a practical success. These questions were:—

Can airways eclipse all other means of transport in sheer speed of movement?

Can they, in addition, be made safe?

Can they also be made reliable?

Finally, can they be made to pay?

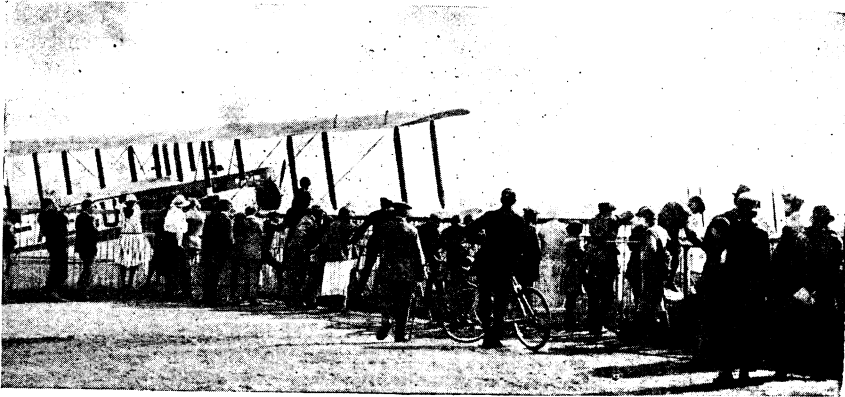
Already, one submits, after only five years of experimental working, we are on the way to answering, and answering satisfactorily, these searching questions. The speed of the "air express"—and not its maximum speed, but its average speed in all weathers—has been proved beyond question. As to the vital question of safety, though accidents have happened, and must still happen—in rapidly decreasing numbers, however, in proportion to the miles flown—we have disproved already that the commercial carriage of passengers by air, even on such a climatically difficult route as London-Paris, is fraught with any fundamentally serious risk.

As to reliability, even including the most testing pioneer phase, when wireless telephony had not been invoked regularly to help pilots in combating bad weather, this worked out at the highly encouraging figures



I have quoted. Given a perfected organisation, and with coming improvements in "flying stock," the European airways can operate, by night as well as day, with a reliability amply sufficient to meet all the demands of the business world. This may be taken as a definite, unquestioned fact. The main enemy, as has been shown, is bad visibility. But with greater flying experience, perfected navigational aids, and with the progress of wireless that is now going on, the commercial pilot will simply go up, no matter what the visibility, and fly unerringly by scientific navigation to his journey's end; and here, when the time comes to land, he will have such aerodrome lighting and landing aids and guides as will permit him to make a safe

the financial aspect of airways. Why, one may ask as a preliminary to clearing up this point, have not they paid hitherto? The answer is that they have never been properly capitalised; the post-war slump prevented this. Furthermore, it is only just lately that they have had "flying stock" which is in any way a commercial proposition. A very practical test here, in regard to the improvement of design, is to take what one can carry, in the way of a commercial load, with any given horsepower. In 1920 four passengers, with a very small quantity of baggage, were being transported at 100 miles an hour with a 360 h.p. engine. To-day eight travellers, with a considerable amount of luggage, are being carried at the same speed with an



PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE AIRWAY.

*More and more people are now discovering that our flying-station at Croydon is one of the new sights of London. In this picture spectators are seen at the rails of the public enclosure watching the preparations which are being made to dispatch to Paris one of the big twin-engined passenger "air expresses."*

descent even on an aerodrome which is obscured.

Putting the whole thing in a nutshell, it is all a question of organisation and experience. Already things are done in bad-weather flying which would have been thought impossible a year or so ago. And the organising process is steady and unceasing. Of course there must be weather sometimes which interferes with flying in the same way that it disorganises land and sea travel. The whole question is one of averages, and as an all-the-year-round means of transport, when its ground equipment is perfected, the commercial aeroplane will have nothing to fear in comparison with its older competitors, the railway train and steamer.

Finally, one has the pertinent question of

engine of 450 h.p., while now in construction, and shortly to be delivered, is a new type of air express which will transport fourteen passengers and their luggage at 100 miles an hour with the power of a 650 h.p. motor.

Financial success has been almost impossible so long as there were only a few air-lines running haphazard here and there, and with no organised flow of traffic forthcoming. To-day already, though subsidies will be required for some time to come, we stand at the dawn of a new era. With new flying stock which, from the viewpoint of load carried for any given expenditure of power, will be an entirely different and far more favourable proposition than were the machines in use in the purely experimental phase, there is a growing feeling of confidence in the financial future of a properly-exploited



airway system. As so much depends on the mileage of the lines you can operate, and the number of machines you can keep usefully employed, the development of new international routes, each feeding the other, and creating dependable volumes of air-borne traffic, renders the business prospects of aerial transport better now almost every day. Great new machines we are to have which will fly from London to Malta without alighting. Another long-range type, able to fly 500 miles without descending, even against a thirty miles an hour wind, will operate on the Empire link between Baghdad and Karachi. Others—metal flying-boats—will carry twenty passengers between Calcutta and Rangoon. The day is in sight when travellers who take their tickets in London will be able to make a complete circuit of the globe by air.

To fill in experimentally two of the gaps which still exist in one important scheme for a route round the world, huge airships are to be employed on cruises over the Pacific from San Francisco to Vladivostok and from New York across the Atlantic to Europe. These trans-ocean stages, measuring more than 9,000 miles, and the over-land route of approximately 4,000 miles between Vladivostok and Moscow, will have to be flown regularly—the above-water lines by airship, and the land section by aeroplane expresses—before passengers complete globe-girdling journeys by this particular route.

Already in existence, operating daily, is the big air-link crossing the United States between New York and San Francisco; also the trans-European route from Moscow

to London *via* Berlin. Assuming an accurate connection between airship and aeroplane, a time-table for the world route London—New York—San Francisco—Vladivostok—Moscow—Berlin—London shows that it might be accomplished in an actual flying time of not more than about ten days.

Entirely encouraging, though too complex to go into here, are the carefully-prepared statistics now available as to the detailed working of an airway, and more particularly as to the way the cost of operation per mile becomes more and more reasonable as the overhead charges are spread over a growing volume of daily traffic. Given, in fact, a widespread European air service, in which national companies work in close co-operation with each other as to time-tables and "flying stock," it becomes perfectly apparent already that a big day-and-night service, with an extensive mileage and a large volume of traffic, can well afford—and this, eventually, without State subsidies—to carry travellers in all directions at 100 miles an hour, and charge them no more than a moderate "super-express" fee over and above the rates charged at present for European express train transport. At such an "air express" super-charge, based in a business-like way upon time actually saved as compared with the fastest earth travel, European air transport ought, within a reasonable time now, to be put permanently on a profit-earning basis; which is not by any means a bad conclusion for one to be able to arrive at after only five years of airway working.







"Angus followed the trail."

# THE SOLE SURVIVORS

By H. MORTIMER BATTEN

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT

SO far as the sole survivor could make out, the vessel had broken clean in two when she came down upon the reef. Anyway, she had sunk like a broken bottle, and her deck cargo of suffering humanity had cascaded amidships into the sea. There had followed much shouting and the hissing of steam, but these sounds had faded into the night of fog, and the sole survivor found himself alone on a deck raft which had somehow cleared the rigging and the wireless. How he had got there he did not know, but, at any rate, it did not matter. He was alone, I say—but no, not quite. There were two others with him, and he remembered dragging them from the sea, having searched in vain for more valuable livestock. It was just in accordance with his luck that he, of them all, had struck a safe sea deck.

Luck! Angus McFortune had always boasted of his luck, and to-day it dogged his steps with its usual persistency. For the moment he was busy applying artificial respiration to one of the other two—drying her out with his neckcloth, which, strange to say, was quite dry, though the rest of his clothing was saturated. Also his hair and his moustache were dry, so he could not

have been under water higher than the shoulders. That, of course, was in accordance with his luck—not a single mouthful of brine had he imbibed!

They were a strange trio, the red-haired seaman, the big black tomcat, and the big white female rabbit. It was the rabbit Angus McFortune was bringing round. He had pulled her from the sea, where she was floating belly upwards. At first he thought she was dead, but now, slowly, surely, she was coming round. His other raft mate, the big black cat, had been the skipper's omen of luck. Well, the luck certainly had deserted the skipper, but it had transferred itself to Angus McFortune. He had no fears for the future.

A heavy swell was running, and the driving fog was impenetrable for more than forty feet. The raft, with her light cargo, rode like a cork. At one end of her was a sea-tight case, and, having restored the doe rabbit, Angus McFortune went forward and unscrewed the hinged lid. Inside were a number of cork life-savers, a rope, a drum of water, a large box of biscuits, some Hudson's Bay blankets, a box of matches, a bottle of quinine, and several cans of emergency ration. *Luck*, if you like, but



Angus cursed himself for not thinking before of the life-belts. It was too late now, but—well, he might as well give someone the benefit of the doubt. The tide was running at several knots, and for two or three minutes the red-haired seaman amused himself by hurling the life-savers out into the fog, distributing them impartially. Some poor devil might be glad of one.

A minute or so later, however, Angus changed his mind on this point, for he saw something which put the stopper on any idea of life-savers. It was a pointed dorsal fin idly cutting the surface a few feet from the raft.

It was growing darker every minute, and clearly there was not much object in sitting up, so Angus got out the blankets, made them fast with the rope, and prepared to sleep. He tucked the rabbit in behind his back, and the cat tucked itself in against his chest, and each of them was quite satisfied with the present order.

But Angus could not sleep because of a dull heaviness in his head, and because he kept on thinking that he could hear human voices about and around him. Once he must have dozed off, for he thought he saw the top rigging of a sunken vessel gliding by at astonishing speed, and clinging to the rigging one of his shipmates. He leapt up, disturbing the cat and startling the rabbit, but only to find the blackness of night around, and the hiss of the fog and of the sea. Never before had the sea seemed so immense and ominous and lonely to his sailor mind.

For a time Angus lay looking at the blackness, then he saw something—really saw something which made him realise that there is one thing worse than being alone. It is—not being sure that one *is* alone.

At first he felt something grating under the raft, and he strained his eyes and his ears and his nostrils for any sign of land. The grating ceased, and alongside the raft he saw—the Thing! It was a shark, he supposed, but it was luminous, phosphorescent. He could see its whole trailing, straggling outline as it rose to the top, then it sank slowly down into the blackness till it looked like a streak of ghostly vapour. Angus McFortune laughed boisterously to keep his nerves together. Thereafter he could see luminous sharks everywhere, whether or not his eyes were open. The whole air was full of them.

Morning came at length, and a gull overhead brought welcome relief. It wheeled round a time or two, then alighted on the

end of the raft and presently went to sleep. So Angus McFortune stalked in and wrung its neck, then he cut it up and gave the cat its ration, placing the balance in the sea-tight box.

The rabbit seemed sick—too much salt water probably. She lay prostrate on her side and refused to take any interest in life. Angus tried to feed her on scraps of dry biscuit, thinking that it would absorb the salt water, but she would not look at it. Then he remembered the fresh water in the box, and gave her some from the drinking cup. She drank long and eagerly, as a horse drinks, then she ate some of the biscuit and began to hop about the raft.

Judging from the behaviour of the gull, there was no land near as yet, and when a little while later the fog momentarily lifted, there was none to be seen. Angus sang songs, then he amused himself playing with the cat, his omen of luck.

But the luck took an abrupt turn—at any rate, so far as the cat was concerned. Angus was lying flat on the raft, his chin on his hands, and the cat was opposite him, dabbing at his nose and his mouth as he pulled grimaces. Suddenly it flattened, clutching the deck, and only just in time Angus grabbed its head. There was a lunge and a swerve in the water, and—well, the omen of luck was tailless.

This taught both Angus and the cat a lesson, for evidently it had allowed its tail tip to overhang the edge. Something had seen it twitching, and had taken it as a trout takes a fly. So the cat spent the remainder of the day nursing the stump and glowering vindictively at the besieging waters.

That night Angus McFortune could not rid himself of the notion that a dead man was climbing out of the sea on to the end of the raft. Several times he saw the man distinctly—a big fellow wearing a voluminous black shirt and a red rag round his white neck. Then the darkness would close, so that Angus could not even see the end of the raft, and three times he had to get up and grope over to assure himself that the man was not there. He could not understand it, because he had never been a nervous man, and such hallucinations were not in accordance with his usual run of luck.

At daybreak Angus again fed his animals carefully and systematically. The cat was still fretting about its tail, but its loss did not seem to affect its general health. Later the rabbit suddenly contracted



suicidal mania. She erected her ears and hopped straight across the raft, falling with a flop into the sea. Angus risked his life fishing her out, and told her severely that if she did it again she could "dern well drown." But she *did* do it again, immediately she was free of his hands, and again he fished her out. This time he untwisted a length of the rope and tied her up amidships. He concluded that her conduct was due to the fact that she was shortly to become a mother-rabbit for perhaps the twentieth time. Evidently she was not satisfied with the raft, and was anxious to find a suitable nest for her forthcoming brood.

When next Angus looked round he saw a veritable flotilla of dorsal fins, large and small, moving and stationary, on every side. A gull screamed overhead, then another and another, and in a minute the air was full of gulls. Angus sniffed, and a shout of joy broke from his lips. Land? Yes, land! He could smell it, he could feel it, and he went over and cuddled the black cat which had brought him luck.

But there was no current here, no wind, only the oily swell, and for three hours the raft lay motionless in the fog, while Angus strained his eyes till they hurt. He argued with himself and almost came to blows with himself. *Had* he scented land, or was it another derved hallucination? No, he could scent it now—the smell of wet earth and of wet grass, but—was it receding?

Anyway, why didn't they bump? Why were there no indications of tide? The suspense was maddening, till at length it dawned upon Angus that they were in dead calm water. Thousands of gulls now filled the air, thousands of little fishes all round broke the surface into a ripple.

\* \* \* \*

Twenty minutes later the raft grounded on a dead smooth sandy beach, and Angus McFortune went cautiously ashore. Under one arm he carried the cat and under the other the rabbit. He had made the rope fast to the raft, and was paying out line as he went, partly because he feared quicksands, primarily because he wished to moor the raft above the tide line. Beyond the sands the shore rose sharply, and, mounting, the red-haired seaman found himself in a clear atmosphere. Ahead was a narrow strip of rolling sandhills, and beyond that what looked like a swamp in the hollow of the landscape, and beyond

the swamp, three miles or so away, a rugged hill rose for perhaps eight hundred feet. On either side of the strip there appeared to be sea, but Angus argued that, according to his luck, some kind of mainland would lie behind the hill, with possibly—probably human habitation. The swamp might prove brackish, but with a hill that size there should be a freshwater spring somewhere. That was his first concern, and he set off hopefully towards the swamp.

As he went he was surprised to find the earth honeycombed with burrows—burrows which looked like those of rabbits, interspersed with smaller ones, made by rodents of some kind, possibly lemmings. Here the ground was firmer, and under the coating of sand was a bed of sterile red-clay soil, and every few paces it fell through under the man's feet, so that he sank to the knees owing to the honeycombing. Yet, most mysterious of all, not a rodent could he see, and their habitations bore no indication of having been used for a long, long time. In parts the great warrens had fallen in, and the surface of the earth was broken and filled with sand pools.

Pondering over these peculiarities, Angus did not at first notice that he had struck what must have been a road—a human road, a cart track. On his left it wound back to the coast, but ahead it went on till it dipped out of sight into the swamp. The wheel tracks were filled with sand, but there were no indications of a horse having been used. Men evidently had pulled the cart, and many months, perhaps years, had passed since the vehicle came that way.

Angus followed the trail, and soon he found himself crossing the swamp by a dry ridge which bore every resemblance to having at least received human assistance in its creation. Here there were birds, many birds, birds he knew, squatting about the pools—knots, redshanks, snipe, dunlin, curlews, golden plovers, and a host of others, all so absurdly tame that the man's hopes rose. No immediate danger of starvation, but of course these birds might be passing migrants. He tested the stagnant water. Yes, as he had expected, it was brackish. But since human life had once existed here, there was no reason why he should not exist till a vessel picked him up.

\* \* \* \*

Some time later he reached the foot of the hill, and because dusk was near and the road went winding round its base, he left the road in order to examine the lie of the





"It was over so quickly that Angus could not quite decide what *had* happened."

land from the summit of the hill. He found a green patch, and he tethered his white rabbit in the middle of it, leaving her to eat her fill, and because he was tired of carrying her. Then he toiled up the slope, carrying the black cat, because his sailor mind bade him do so. And as he went he told himself repeatedly that this was an island, and when he got to the top he saw that indeed it was. At the foot of the opposite slope was the sea not a mile away, and from where Angus now stood he could see the sea all round. There was precious little on that island, save the swamp and the hill and the sand dunes, all perforated with lifeless burrows, possibly ten square miles in all. But if there was fresh water, that was quite enough for any adaptable unmarried man.

When Angus got back to the place where he had left his rabbit, he found that she had slipped her collar and had made a nest in the only available cover—a nest of sand grass and fluff from her own body. So he

left her to her own devices, for he knew enough about rabbits to realise that he could do no good by interfering.

Darkness was near now, and Angus was in two minds whether to follow the road or whether to go back to the raft and camp near to his breakfast. Somehow the idea of following the road in the gathering darkness and to an unknown destination did not appeal to his better judgment, so he went back across the swamp. On the way the cat clearly indicated its desire to be put down among the birds, so he let it go, and he watched it stalk a golden plover with consummate ease. The cat brought it back to him, and he tucked it into his pocket, encouraging the cat to go for another, which it did—a knot this time. This one he allowed it to eat, but the plover he took with him for his own supper. Uncommonly good it was, too, roasted on a spit, and accompanied by his emergency ration of biscuits. Luck! Angus laughed aloud when he thought of his luck. He only





"A head had darted from the stonework and struck the curlew as it drank."

wished that his shipmates were there, so that he could tell them.

Yet somehow, as night settled, that lifeless island, with its unknown history of departed men, filled him with a sense of dread. What really had happened there? Life of many kinds there had been, but now there was no life, save for the birds which came by the air and belonged to other places. Still, he dismissed his fears, and, warm and dry, he settled down for the night, the cat beside him as before. When

later he awoke, to realise with relief that he was no longer on the sea, the cat was gone. He called for it for a time, but when it did not come he fell asleep again, and next he was wakened by the cat mewing and dabbing at his nose with its forepaw. Daylight was very near at hand, and he found it sitting by his face with another golden plover for breakfast.

So Angus ate the plover, then, having bottled some water and stuffed his pockets with biscuits, he set out on his second voyage



of exploration. He had armed himself with a shillalah of seaweed root, and this time the cat followed as a dog follows, till they came to the point at the hill-foot which they had reached last night. Here Angus took up his omen of luck and went on slowly, for again that strange foreboding of the unknown was upon him.

On his right lay the broken hillside, piled up with boulders of all sizes, interspersed by water-washed beds of sand, and the more Angus looked at it the more the feeling grew upon him that those boulders were not just as Nature had placed them. There was a suggestion of the human agency—a suggestion that here and there the rocks had been piled into breastworks and terraces and barricades, camouflaged to resemble the natural hill-face. Once, indeed, he noticed a great cairn of stones which looked as though it might have served as a watch tower. Possibly his imagination was running away with him, but all this was not more improbable than the unmistakable cart track which he trod.

Presently Angus McFortune distinguished a sound which caused him first to wonder whether his ears, too, were playing him false, but as he went on, it became unmistakable—the twittering of a vast army of small birds. He thought that above the rest he could hear the full-voiced notes of some kind of lark, and he was certain of the bustling, discordant clamour of starlings. Then the trail took a sudden turn round a rocky outcrop, and there, directly ahead, was an alcove, obviously man-made, and, rising from the level, a crude castle, built into the hill-face, exactly resembling it till one took a second look. Then one saw the man-built walls, outcropping the natural slope, with terraces and stone steps and cairns and outlook posts, and indications that men had burrowed in the soil. But a bygone generation of men, as was it a bygone generation of rodents which had honeycombed and undermined the island from end to end?

At the base of the primitive stronghold, not sixty yards away, was gathered the multitude of small birds whose twittering Angus had heard. They sat about the rocks and on the earth, warbling and chattering, and the whole place was alive with them. Nor did it take long to find out what had attracted them there, for at the foot of the hill, alongside a flight of tipsy stone steps, was a huge timber trough, built ship-builder fashion. It was covered with moss and

festooned with ferns, and water gurgled into it from a broken, earthenware pipe, overflowing all round so that a swampy patch surrounded the trough. Water? Yes, fresh water, and the birds were there to drink.

But as Angus stared he noticed something strange in the way they drank. They did not pursue the obvious course of alighting on the brink, but they drank as swallows drink—that is a-wing, as though they were afraid to alight. Dozens at a time were hovering over the surface of the trough, and one, then another would dip, casting up a little silver cascade, then away as though scared by its own boldness.

Fresh water? Yes. That meant that Angus could live, and he pushed on eagerly to test the spring. But thirty feet from it the cat uttered a yowl of terror and began to struggle frantically to get away from him, using its claws with an effect which made Angus curse. Instinctively he stepped back, soothing the animal, for had it seen something he could not see? If not, why was it so afraid of the place? His sailor-mind was filled with a new and deadly suspicion.

For a time Angus waited and watched, then again he went quietly up, and again the behaviour of the cat warned him to turn back. This time, in its paroxysm of terror, the animal actually freed itself and scampered back forty paces, bristling and growling, and Angus went after it, fearful that his luck might turn.

He seated himself on a dry spot overlooking the trough and watched. All morning he watched, and he saw thousands of small birds drink, a-wing, but absolutely nothing happened to break the seeming peace of the rugged buttresses. So he was about to approach from another point, when a curlew appeared and somewhat timorously alighted on the trail near to him. The bird looked storm-ruffled, as though it had come a great distance, and obviously it was eager to drink, though afraid of its strange surroundings. Presently, however, summoning up its courage, it flew uncertainly to the trough and alighted at the edge, plunging its long curved beak into the water and drinking thirstily.

Then something unaccountable happened, and in an instant the air became full of fluttering wings and wild cries of alarm. It was over so quickly that Angus could not quite decide what *had* happened. Then he realised that a head had darted from the stonework and struck the curlew as it drank.



Yes, he could see the head dragging its quarry back, back into the darkness of a crevice in the stonework above the trough, and, so far as he could make out, the creature was a huge snake. That, then, was why the small birds had drunk a-wing, and that was why the cat had warned him not to approach.

Angus was no coward, and now that he knew definitely what he was up against, his fears left him. "Well," he muttered, "if yon's the only one of its kind, I guess we'll soon get quit of him!"

He made a detour, climbing the rock-face to a point forty feet or so above the trough, then, taking up a huge stone, he threw it into the water, where it fell with a splash and a resounding "thug." Instantly the head of the reptile darted from the cranny, the curlew still held between its jaws. Angus hurled another stone, hoping to strike it, but he missed by inches, and then, to his horror, the cunning brute turned its head and looked up at him with its expressionless, stony stare.

The black cat turned with a caterwaul of terror and scrambled down and out of sight, and as it did so the creature, with a sluggish motion, the swiftness of which deceived the eye, began to emerge—to coil up and over the rocks towards Angus.

It was not a pleasant moment, but the sailor rose to the occasion. Stone after stone he hurled, but his powers of judgment seemed to have left him. He missed the snake by feet rather than inches, and the full length of the brute was now in view—sixteen feet of blotched and mottled venom, which looked like a poisonous vine. It paid no heed to the fusillade of stones which struck and burst on either side, and half the intervening space was covered ere it dropped the curlew and uttered an evil hiss as it came on towards the man.

Angus gave his back to the rocks. Retreat he could not, and to try to climb down would be suicidal. He must stand where he was. And now he recalled his shillalah of seaweed. He flung its heavy end over his shoulder and stood there, ready to strike. A skilled golfer was Angus McFortune when ashore, and he was not likely to miss his stroke.

The sinister head came up, up, till it reared above the level of the shelf at his very feet. Then Angus stepped back and delivered a blow which would have stunned a rhinoceros.

Something had to go, either his wrist or the snake or the shillalah of seaweed, which was tough as leather and almost as heavy

as lead. Something had to go, but Angus timed his blow accurately and well, and next moment he felt a shower over his face and his arms. The weapon was torn from his grip, and the monster fell, writhing, lashing, encircling the rocks and falling again, till it landed with a thud on the wet earth, its head almost severed from its body.

"That's learnt him a lesson, anyway!" muttered Angus McFortune, dashing the sweat from his eyes. Then he sat down to recover his breath. He wondered if there were any more of the same breed about, and for half an hour he hurled stones at the battlements; but nothing stirred save the birds. So at length he went down, took up his cat, and recovered the remains of his shillalah.

Up the disordered steps Angus climbed, while his omen of luck raised no objection. He gained the first terrace, and certainly no human feet had trodden it for a long, long time. Everything was covered with moss, and, peering over the crude battlements, he observed something which he had not noticed hitherto. It was a level green patch away to the right—a patch of perhaps a quarter of an acre in extent, and dotted all over it, in even array, were a number of small cairns of stones.

Yes, it looked like a human burial ground. What else, indeed, could it be? True, there were no epitaphs, no crosses, simply the little cairns of man-laid stones, and the nearest cairn was very small, and the earth over what had apparently been the grave had been roughly restored, as though the gravedigger had found his task almost too much for him.

Doors opened from the hillside on to the terrace, and there were windows which had been covered with parchment, only a mouldy fragment of which remained here and there. Angus went to the nearest door, which stood ajar. It was solidly constructed, as though by a ship's joiner, and the hinges, roughly beaten out as a blacksmith would beat them, appeared to be made of brass. It swung open to his touch without a creak, and inside the little room were the frameworks of what had been human beds, with sackcloth as mattresses and sand grass as bedding. The mattresses were a mass of holes, gnawed by rodents, and the sand grass was a litter of chaff, and now Angus saw that the floor was littered with small white skeletons. Rats! The remains of a plague of rats—remains which, sheltered



from the weather behind the closed door, were still perfect and intact.

Angus was about to leave the sinister place, when again he noticed those hinges, and a sudden thought occurred to him. He took his knife and scraped the surface of one of them. It was soft under the blade, and beneath the weather-dulled surface was a colour which there was no mistaking. The hinges were of rough, beaten gold!

Bit by bit the air was clearing, but, strangely enough, Angus did not realise the magnitude of his find. He automatically put it down to his luck and to the black cat. He had, of course, expected something of this kind, and nothing at that moment would have surprised him, nothing would unduly have excited him.

He went on to the second chamber and the third, then up another flight of steps to the next terrace, exploring each nook as he came to it. Here the water which fed the trough had worn away its man-prescribed path, and ran at random everywhere. He saw a series of wooden boxes placed one below another, and from one to the next of which the water had once gushed in a series of little falls. He knew that this had been a launder—a gold-washing sluice. Also there was a huge furnace room dug into the hill-face; but Angus did not explore its recesses, it looked so black and shadowy. Snakes might live there, or something even worse. He went on from room to room, and at first each was much like the last, till in one he found implements—crowbars, picks, spades, sieves, each which had woodwork about it gnawed by the rats. Another room had been the cookhouse, for there was a long table, and the cooking utensils and the range and cauldron. Anon he found what had been the storeroom, full of empty sacks, now for the most part dust, while the very boxes on the floor were gnawed to splinters for any taste of food they might have carried.

Finally he came to a door which was locked, and his instincts told him that behind that door lay something worth while. So he went back to the tool-room and got a heavy crowbar. With this he jabbed and levered and banged till the massive portal yielded, and inside the room was what he expected—gold bullion. It was stacked up about the floor in orderly squares, and occupied half the floor-space. In one corner was a great pile of yellow dust, much as a miller might leave his yellow grain, and at the sight of it Angus McFortune uttered a whoop. But somehow the sound of his own

voice startled him. He had not had time as yet to think what all this meant.

But the stone steps still led on and up, from this terrace to the next, though much narrower now. So he went up, and the steps led him to a single door, which was closed. In front of this door was a small terrace with battlements. Evidently it was the look-out tower of the lot, for it commanded a view of the sea on all four sides. This was the last door. If Angus was to find anything to shed light upon the mystery, he would surely find it here. He fought with the latch, and finally it yielded. Very cautiously he pushed the door open, and it opened silently like the first. Beyond was a small chamber, perhaps eight feet by nine feet, and leaning against the opposite wall, fantastically illuminated by a ray of sunlight which fell through the half-open door, sat what had been a man. One of the skeleton hands held a quill pen, and on the floor near by was a little black bottle, uncorked, which had once contained ink. But what arrested Angus's gaze was a sheet of foolscap tacked to the wall above the remains of that sole occupant. On the sheet something was written in an unsteady but educated hand. Angus went up and read the scree. It ran: "Written by the sole survivor of this enterprise. Briefly our history is this:

"This island belongs to France. We owed France nothing, and there was no special reason why that country should annex the lion's share of our find. France wants money, so do we. This is a little Klondyke.

"We brought the rabbits here ten years ago to provide an emergency ration, but they became too numerous, and began to die in such thousands that we could not cope with them. We caught tons in pits, and carried them to the sea. Then our skipper brought the snakes, which, he said, were Nature's remedy for the rabbits. That was not our experience, because the snakes seemed to prefer cannibalism. They ate each other, and are still eating each other, and soon there will be only one surviving snake—the one big enough and best able to eat the rest."

Angus paused a moment, then he read on:

"We should have quit after we had got out the first three shiploads, but we were too greedy, and just five years ago to-day our steamer piled herself up on the north reef, sinking with all aboard. She was an old boat and full of rats. We saw her go to bits, and we saw the rats swim ashore in an army. So we became marooned, and we



have waited since for a vessel. No vessel has appeared, but the rats have increased beyond all belief. They have annihilated the rabbits, and since then life has become impossible for us and for them. They have eaten us out, and we cannot fight them. Moreover, they have contracted some ghastly disease, and our men have got it one by one. Now I am the sole survivor, and I have shut myself here, the only rat-proof building that remains.

"A month from now there will be no rats left, but that does not matter, because there will be none of us left. There were forty of us, and whoever finds this accursed island is welcome to it. But if he takes my tip he will do the square thing and hand it over to France for what it is worth to that country and to him. At any rate, don't do what we did. This place is a hell-pit."

\* \* \* \* \*

Angus pondered, dimly conscious that he had read in those plain statements what was one of the most terrible histories ever penned by human hand. He pondered on the final advice. Any government, he calculated, would pay a handsome royalty on such a find as this, which was too big for a man like him to handle, but— Suddenly his hopes fell. They had waited five years for a ship, so why should he—

He turned out of the dingy chamber, for the air seemed suddenly to have become stifling. On the terrace he mastered himself, and stood stroking his cat. His luck! Yes, this was his luck, but what did it mean? Marooned on this place with all its horrible

associations, to wait and wait, and yet to wait!

But suddenly Angus started, and the cat leapt from his arms, for there came a startling and unearthly roar which seemed to fill all earth and sky. It echoed from terrace to terrace, from chamber to chamber, died down in a million echoes, then occurred again.

Angus shot down those steps in pursuit of his cat. He took them five at a time, fairly jumping from terrace to terrace, not because he was afraid—oh, no! He was a seaman, and he knew that sound. It was his luck, his wonderful, infernal, almost devilish luck! For he knew now that their wireless operator had managed to rattle out a message before their boat sank, and that roar was the siren of a cruiser searching for the castaways.

\* \* \* \* \*

As Angus bounded down the beach towards the boat that awaited him, the officer standing to greet him laughed loudly. "Here you are, sonny, with your omen of luck," he said. "I reckon your luck's in all right!"

"Yes," muttered the red-haired seaman, "and thank God! I thought I was to be left to starve in this rotten hole!"

The officer glanced round. "Rotten—yes," he admitted. "Nothing but grass and rocks and swamp."

"Nothing!" Angus agreed. But when next he visited the island, rather over a year later, there was indeed something else—a very flourishing colony of pure white rabbits.

## SEWING.

**T**HE wood fire crackles and I sit and sew;  
 Gold sparks spit sharply and the blue flames lick  
 Beneath the charred logs where the embers glow;  
 Outside the mists are rising grey and thick.  
 I watch my hands at work, the rise and fall  
 Of thread and needle, and the lamp-light gleams  
 Upon my thimble gold, and on the wall  
 I see my shadow moving as in dreams.  
 Grey shades are dancing where the firelight glows;  
 I smell potpourri in the old cracked jar,  
 Blue lavender and fragrant withered rose;  
 Frail memories of summer dead they are,  
 Gold days behind me and still twilights green:  
 Now Autumn winds blow hard to Hallowe'en.

MARIAN ALLEN.





"Fifty thousand pounds worth of misery! Heavens, but I've been a fool!"

# TRANQUILLITY

By PHILIP BURTON

ILLUSTRATED BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

**D**OWN the side of the sodden coppice a man trudged slowly, and the steady squelch of his waterlogged boots beat a rhythm into the hiss and patter and tinkle of the rain. His tweed hat and the raincoat whose upturned collar rose to meet its sagging brim were soaked to the same dark hue; rain dripped from the barrels of the gun he carried on his arm, and steamed on the inverted bowl of his pipe. Already the rain had crept into his coat-pockets and filtered through his clothes; had worked through the knees of his breeches and run down under gaiters and stockings to gurgle clammyly in his boots; presently, as a cold pricking sensation on the crown

of his head informed him, it would be coursing down his neck.

The pipe, whose inverted droop had given a final touch of dejection to the slouching figure, jerked and quivered. "Fifty thousand!" the mouth that held it was muttering. "Fifty thousand pounds worth of misery! Heavens, but I've been a fool!"

It was a little more than a year since Frank Simmons had bought the Crayshaw estate. Frank Simmons, "The Lottery King," as they called him in Brakeshire, and "The Counterjumper," and "Moddam."

A year before that he had won outright the Great United Charities Competition for eighty thousand pounds.



In the county more than one detail of Simmons's earlier life was "known for a fact." He had been behind the counter at Berry and Buntings', in Oxford Street, in the Gents' Hosiery Department—one of those chaps who roll a tie round their fingers and hold it up to their necks, to show you how poisonous the thing can look; the sort of man who calls a waistcoat a "gent's fancy vest," and talks of "neckwear," and puts an "x" in socks. A shopman, smirking, obsequious. What was the correct term in this age of euphemistic misnomer? A gentleman sales attendant? Heaven knew. "Gentleman" something, pretty certainly. But *that*, in any case, was what had bought the Crayshaws out.

The gossips, as it happens, were wrong. Simmons, looking back into the past as he trudged down the side of the coppiece, saw himself not behind the counter, but on the office stool. It had been in the accounts department, as a clerk, that he had served Berry and Buntings'. Ten years—apart from that interval of the War. Not, he reflected, unhappy years, on the whole, but empty, somehow—meaningless. He hadn't been in a position to pick and choose when his father had died, and the furniture shop in the Euston Road had been sold to pay his debts. It had been a question of getting a job, and getting one without delay.

Once he had got the hang of it, things had, perhaps, been too easy at B. and B.'s. He had never needed to extend himself to the limit. He might, indeed, have tried for some other job—something more difficult, and so more highly paid. At first there had been his mother to be considered; and after she died, the obstacle that had once been risk changed imperceptibly to effort. After all, he hadn't been so badly off. Such rises and promotions as a cut-and-dried scheme permitted he invariably obtained. He had a head for figures, and, as the only legacy of his too generous father, some advantage over the other fellows in the way of education. They called him Simmy, and seemed to like him in a negative, detached way. Their interests ran in well-worn grooves—league football, girls, and politics; and Simmons had a passionless dislike of all the three. He never made a friend there, or an enemy. Chiefly, in retrospect, he seemed to have lived to spend his annual holidays in remote parts of the country, walking about, doing nothing in particular, strangely happy.

After the upheaval caused by his

stupendous luck, there had been Spain, Italy, Egypt—a year of it; and despite interest and pleasure and unwonted luxuries, he had been lonely, and filled with a perverse and disappointing desire for home.

It was the day after he landed, when he was still full of the longing for English countryside that had teased him on his travels, was still contrasting its familiar, friendly solitude with the aching loneliness of unaccustomed company, that the Crayshaw estate had beckoned to him from the front page of *The Times*. A month later it was his.

Simmons turned through a gate and took the streaming bridle-path that led through Mitchett's Farm to the Colsingford road, and so to the Manor. Presently he stopped, unloaded his gun, and slipped the cartridges into a trouser pocket; then sought, by a process of elimination, to find a dry match that would light his pipe. He found one at last, and as he puffed the acrid smoke of the damp dottle he gave a sudden laugh. He had remembered a remark overheard in Cromley corn market. "What, old Moddam?" It was a boy of eighteen, leaning out of his stationary car to speak to a girl who wheeled a bicycle, and both had their backs to him as he came out of the tobacconist's. "You mean to say you've never seen him? Oh, he's a priceless creature! Goes about all day sucking an unlit pipe, because he thinks it's part of a country gentleman's make-up."

Simmons's sense of humour had extinguished the anger that had flared at the words and the laugh that followed them. It was extraordinary. Whatever you did they picked holes in it. He had smoked a pipe since he was sixteen—a little more than half his life. It was the same, apparently, with the way he spoke. He had seen people listening for him to drop his aitches, becoming perplexed, almost restive, when he didn't. That school to which his father couldn't afford to send him—and characteristically sent him—had taught him not to. Perhaps, he thought with momentary bitterness, he ought to have this explanation printed on his cards!

But it was the thought of Cummings that weighed on his mind as he tramped home through the rain—Cummings, his right-hand man, his all-too-zealous agent-secretary, the embodiment of all those worries and petty harassments that had turned his dream of country peace into a nightmare of unwelcome obligations.



Gerald Cummings had been a find. There had been a time, Simmons remembered, when he had blessed the Fates that had sent him this pleasant, eminently capable ex-major to help him in the management of the estate. Cummings knew much from experience, and the rest, it seemed, by instinct; had an easy, matter-of-fact way of tackling problems that had seemed insoluble. And very obviously he enjoyed his work.

It was, in all probability, this last fact that lay at the root of the trouble. It prevented him, Simmons thought, from seeing his own point of view, made it impossible for him to sympathise. "It's peace I want," Simmons complained to himself, "and he doesn't understand. I only bought the place because I wanted peace. Fifteen hundred green acres to be peaceful in, and he comes worrying, worrying. If only he—and the place itself—would let me alone as completely as my precious neighbours do! Can't you buy happiness even when all you want is peace?"

That morning there had been something uncomfortably like a scene. Cummings had come up from the lodge—he had refused, from the first, to live in the Manor House—with questions, and papers, and matters that required decision. Simmons was in the library, poring over back numbers of *Colour*, and making notes on a sheet of paper. He had conceived the idea of commissioning an artist—several artists, perhaps—to paint landscapes in the estate. He would have a gallery of pictures—fine, sweeping things in oils, perpetuating the seasons' glories throughout the year. An autumn dawn, for instance, on the Broadmeads, with the river steaming behind the feathery willows, and the plovers rising out of the ground-mist to cry and tumble in the flushed sky. A wonderful thing to have by you through such a sodden January as this! And water-colours, too—little glimpses and vignettes to catch one's eye in this room and that.

He thought he saw Cummings raise a quizzical eyebrow at the pile of magazines, and his mood changed to irritation. They sat facing each other across the table. Simmons ran through the proffered papers, signing his name where necessary without question or comment. He paused for a moment at a plan of meadow drainage. Cummings bent forward to explain its intricacies. He had spent some weeks on it. "I'd like you," he said, "to go into this."

Simmons pushed it away with a petulant movement of his hand, and threw himself back in his chair. "Oh, look here, Cummings"—his tone was plaintive rather than impatient—"I do wish you wouldn't worry me. You're perfectly capable of doing the whole business off your own bat, and doing it remarkably well. Couldn't you manage to —"

Cummings's lean, clean-cut face had stiffened perceptibly. "Really," he interrupted, "you make my position extraordinarily difficult. Whether I could run this place without coming to you, is neither here nor there. I'm your agent and your secretary; not the bailiff of an absentee landlord. Don't you see what a false position we'd both be in if I did something that you afterwards discovered was against your principles or interests? You know," he added, with more of his old manner, genuine friendliness tempered by a formal respect, "you're as fond of the place as I am. That's the funny part of it." But there had been a strained, uncomfortable quality in their parting.

Simmons had reached the Colsingford road that, running along the nethermost ridge of the foothills, divided the low-lying half of the estate from the hill farms and high pasture-lands beyond. He turned to the right and quickened his pace towards the Manor gates. On his left and above him the upper storey of the house showed through the trees of the park. Already a light or two shone from the windows. He thought, more happily, of dry clothes, a bath, and tea.

It was after dinner, when Simmons had made himself comfortable in a big armchair in front of the smoking-room fire, that Cummings returned to the attack.

He paused in the doorway, looking across the room at Simmons, surrounded once more by his back numbers of *Colour*; and this time he seemed beyond doubt to suppress a smile. "Busy?" he asked. He stood with his back to the fire, and for a time was silent as he filled a pipe. "Look here," he said at length, "I know you think I'm an awful nuisance, but I thought I ought to tell you about this. I've been down in Cromley to-day, and the place is full of rumours and scares about floods. Of course the river is up a bit, and the lower part of the Broadmeads is under water already. That's quite usual this time of year. What's biting Cromley is a scare about the reservoirs at Colsingford. You've



seen 'em, of course? Well, owing to the unusual rain, I suppose, there's been a slight subsidence of the wall—the big bank on the south side. Probably it's nothing. The council engineer says there isn't the slightest cause for anxiety. Still, I've been working it out, and if it did go, I fancy we'd have about sixty acres or more flooded tolerably quickly. All that sort of basin below the Colsingford road. Three farms, of course, Mitchett's, Low Farm, and Riverside—Riverside especially. What I was going to suggest was that to-morrow, if there seems to be the smallest danger of anything happening, we should go round the farms and see if we could work out any sort of scheme. Might be worth getting cattle on to higher ground, possibly. Mind you, I agree that the whole thing's probably nonsense. Still, there's a certain responsibility—”

Simmons, who had hated himself for the growing irritation that throughout the other's speech he had been unable to check, was stung by that last word to sudden anger.

“Oh, responsibility!” he said. “I tell you I'm sick of it—sick to death of it. I'd chuck the whole thing up for two pins!”

Cummings took the pipe out of his mouth, and his lips closed in a straight line. He looked down his nose at the man in the chair with a contempt he was at no pains to hide. “Please accept my resignation, Mr. Simmons,” he said quietly. “I shall continue to serve you to the best of my ability till I can hand over to my successor.”

He walked stiffly towards the door, but Simmons, rising from his chair, called to him to stop.

“Cummings!” he said, and paused. He was tempted, sorely tempted. All that day he had been playing with the thought of cutting loose, of putting the Crayshaw estates once more into the market, and always it had been Cummings who blocked the path. After a year of Cummings's stewardship the place would sell for more than it had cost him, and Cummings—would be left high and dry. Pay him off? See that he didn't lose by it? No, he wouldn't take a penny. One knew instinctively he wouldn't.

It had seemed impossible to get clear without behaving with monstrous injustice. Always one met this cursed responsibility, no matter where one turned. Even Cummings. And now Cummings had surprisingly given him the key of escape.

“Cummings,” he repeated, “don't go

till I've said what I want to say. I won't accept your resignation. I won't discuss it—now. After a year together we've simultaneously lost our tempers for about five minutes. Let's leave it at that for the present. To-morrow we can have the matter out.”

Cummings smiled his tight-lipped smile. “Very well,” he said, “I'll wish you good night.” He closed the door after him neither noisily nor softly, but with an admirable moderation.

In bed that night Simmons, thinking of the evening's crisis, was glad that he had temporised. To have accepted Cummings's resignation when a chap had worked for you like that—no, too dirty a trick altogether. One would buy peace rather dearly at the price of peace of mind! One couldn't always shirk responsibility.

He woke once, in the small hours, and heard the rain roaring on the verandah roof below his window. The dark was full of the sound of water—drip and gurgle and the splashing of roof-torrents. “Floods,” he thought sleepily. “Floods, and worries—worries without ceasing.” A gust of wind sent the rain rattling against the leaded glass, making him start. “Oh, shut up!” he said to the wrathful heavens, and pulled the clothes over his ears.

The room was full of light that hurt his eyes, and loud voices clamouring unintelligibly. Someone had hold of his shoulder, and was rocking him to and fro. He groped with wandering hands for his assailant, and blinked sticky eyes that would not focus.

Suddenly he was wide awake, gazing into Cummings's tense face, held by the hard blue eyes that looked into his.

“Wake?” Cummings shot words at him like rifle bullets. “Listen! It's happened—what I told you. Must have. The water's up to the edge of the road. Noise of it woke me quarter of an hour ago. Man, there can't be less than six foot of it at Riverside, and running like a millrace! They're drowning while we talk—cattle and horses—men and women possibly.”

Simmons was out of bed, struggling into trousers, cursing them in a vicious undertone for their resistance to his clumsiness. His mind, shocked into active life, was full of scenes envisaged with a frosty clarity. He saw the brown waters racing across the fields—his fields; screaming, with horrid and unexpected sounds of menace, against the grey walls of sleeping farms—his farms; he saw men blasted out of quiet sleep,



running to windows, flinging on clothes in desperate, useless hurry, as he was doing now.

"Cromley?" he jerked out. "Flooded? The town itself?"

Cummings frowned savagely in concentrated thought. "No. Too high. Only

"The *Watersprite*! She's in Pogson's shed—high up. Get her on a lorry, pronto." He ran from the hall towards the billiard-room, shouting over his shoulder: "I'll telephone — boat-houses — garages. Get everything there is. And men. Promise what you like!"



"Simmons slowed down the engine, and the house seemed to run at him like a bull."

east of the bridge. Town itself's all right."

"Get the car, then." Simmons was pushing him out through the door, buttoning things as he talked. "Get down to Cromley—quick. We've got to have boats, see? Any boats—all the boats you can. On lorries." A thought struck him as they ran together down the stairs, and he caught Cummings's arm.

He was speaking into the instrument as he heard the car go down the drive past the house, the note of its engine rising with the forceful urgency of a rocket.

Back in the hall, he stood still for a moment, frowning and biting his lip, then kicked open the door of the cubby-hole under the stairs, and groped for raincoat and gumboots.

Doors were slamming in the house; there were patterings of feet, and calls and rapid questionings. Someone was coming up the steps outside in gritty boots that squeaked



on the stone. There was the soft thump of a fist on the door. Simmons worried back the bolts and bared the bright hall to the dripping dark. "Morgan!" he said. "Good man! There's work for you."



"A rope slapped across the bows, and Morgan pounced on it."

The chauffeur stepped in, blinking, and pulled off his cap. His face, still white and creased with sleep, and smudged below with the night's growth of beard, looked ludicrous and debauched against the neatness of his gaitered uniform.

"I could 'a' took Mr. Cummings down," he said in an aggrieved voice, "if 'e'd given me ten seconds to slip me clothes on. But no, 'No time!' 'e shouts at me."

Simmons grinned. "That's all right," he said swiftly, "I want you here. You know the trouble? Everything's flooded below the road, and we've got to get busy. Cummings is sending the *Watersprite* up from Cromley, and we'll need a lamp on her. What about it?"

Morgan scratched his head with the hand that held the cap. "Lamp?" he said. "I

could lift a headlight off the old Ford van, sir. We got a set of batteries that's charged." He frowned and muttered to himself: "Some sort o' fixin's—swivel, yes, can do, I think." Then he looked up and caught Simmons's eye. "O' course," he said, "I'll need to 'ave it under pers'nal supervision, sir."

"You shall." Simmons was laughing. "Oh, by all means you shall! Get along, now, and get on with it. Bring the stuff down to the road at the end of the drive. You'll find me there. Oh, Mrs. Wilkinson"—he had thrust Morgan towards the open door and turned to where the housekeeper stood craning a grey head of curling pins over the well of the staircase—"you'd better get the whole household ready for work. There may be beds needed—soup—whisky—that sort of thing. Leave the details to you, you understand? But lose no time."

Mrs. Wilkinson opened her mouth. She was not used . . . However. "I'll see about it at once, sir," she replied with surprising meekness.

Even as he went down the drive, it had seemed to Simmons that the air was

full of unaccustomed noises; and now, as he paced to and fro on the road below the gates, his ears could analyse the sounds that rose occasionally above the lap and chuckle of the water. Somewhere a herd was lowing, and fitful gusts of rain-spattering wind carried the distant barking of a dog. Once he thought he heard a shout, and halted, listening with held breath.

In the darkness points of light marked the three farms. Five minutes ago a tiny flare, like a lighted match, had flickered from Riverside.

Further down the road Morgan crouched over his accumulators, wiring up his lamp with the aid of an electric torch. Lights were beginning to show here and there on the black hillside behind the Manor, and men's voices, thin and unreal, floated across



the dripping hollow to the road. Dickson, Cummings's man at the lodge, was carrying the fiery cross up there.

Simmons raised his arm to peer at his watch. Ten to six! It was a bare three miles to Cromley. Surely to Heaven—He had stopped close to Morgan, and their questioning looks met. "Hear that?" he said. Morgan stood up. "It's a lorry, all right," he pronounced. "She'll be here inside a couple of minutes."

Two yellow oil lamps jumped into view at the bend of the road. The lorry rattled and lurched towards them through the rain, and drew up, with clanking engine, at their shouted order. A policeman jumped heavily from the cab and strode across the road, flashing a lantern. "You Mister Simmons, sir? We got your liddle boat. You'll need give 'and with 'er." He turned his lantern on the *Watersprite's* stern, projecting through the tarpaulin curtains. A head poked out, surprisingly, above it. "Come on, then!" it said. "Run 'er out, an' look alive. We're goin' back for more."

Ten minutes later they had the fifteen-foot launch on the bank below the road, with the headlight in her bows. There was a last struggle and heave, a cry to lift the stern and keep the screw clear; then the bows rose in the water, and Simmons and Morgan ran splashing out with her and climbed aboard.

They had covered half the distance to Riverside now, and twice they had grounded and lost valuable minutes wading in the stinging cold of the flood to drag her off. They were in deeper water at last, for Simmons had picked up the Wain lane, and they could set their course between the elms on either side. In the glare of the lamp the trunks rose like black pillars from the flood, and between them, every now and then, the hedge-top showed.

Somewhere in the darkness on the right a dog was barking with despairing monotony, on and on—a sound to wring the heart. Morgan, crouched in the bows to watch for obstacles, spoke over his shoulder. "Couldn't we pick up the dawg, sir?"

Simmons fought down the impulse to acquiesce. "Riverside first," he said. "Ah!" The *Watersprite* made sudden leeway in an unexpected current. An elm towered over them, seeming to swoop forward from the darkness, and grazed the stern. The engine broke its rhythm as the screw tore through the tough blackthorn hedge, then purred

more loudly as Simmons touched the throttle. The double line of trees swept to the left and was gone, and the launch rocked gently across uncharted water.

"That's it, there!" Morgan was leaning forward, pointing. A light flickered across the flood, swelled to a column of flame, and died down. The boat swung round to race up the path of the reflection.

Voices hailed them as the farmhouse loomed black against the sky. "Current," they heard. "Make off left—don't you go coming straight across, now. Tell him to mind and miss the pantry roof; he'll smash the boat—"

Simmons slowed down the engine, and the house seemed to run at him like a bull. He snatched at the reverse lever and gave the engine full throttle. A rope slapped across the bows, and Morgan pounced on it. A wall slid up, grated against the side, and stopped. They were under the window, looking up into crowded faces, besieged with questions.

They had them all aboard but Gunter now. Simmons faced him in the queer, disordered room that was so full of things snatched into safety from below—a jumble sale gone mad, he thought. Morgan shouted from outside: "Come on, sir!"

The farmer strode towards the window, then stopped, plucking at the hidden lips behind the grey moustache. The eyes he turned on Simmons were wide, distraught. "My liddle mare," he said, "and old roan 'orse, next door, they are, in the boys' bedroom. We didn't ought—"

Simmons put a hand on his shoulder and drew him to the window. "Can't take them," he said, "this trip. Later, I swear. Edge her along, Morgan—we're coming now."

The launch lay lower in the water as they made their way back. There were nine of them on board—Gunter, his wife, two little girls who crouched in silence at her knees, two boys who chattered volubly, scared and excited; a village girl, their servant, wept desolately, deaf to threat and cajolement.

"Woke me up," the farmer was saying to Simmons in the stern, "roaring—never in my life I heerd anything like it. Wife, she says 'It's gone!' like that. I knew what she meant. Talking, we were, about that reservoir the night before. Got 'em out, the cattle, before it come up properly. 'Go on,' I says, 'go on—drive 'em,' I says. And Jack—that's my old dog—he has them off up Mitchett's way, galloping. Last I'll



see of dog or cattle, I reckon." He stared silently at a drowned sheep that sailed by the boat. It circled slowly in an eddy, with stiffly upraised legs.

Light had begun to filter through the hanging clouds, and the black waters changed to muddy brown. Easier now to pick a way past snag and shoal towards dry land.

Up in the bows Morgan rose to his feet and pointed. On the left a clump of trees showed, and about and between the trunks, black shapes that seemed to move a little. Again came the barking of a dog, but crisper now, and sharply purposeful.

"It's them!" said Gunter. "By all that's won'erful!" He put his hands to his mouth. "Jack," he roared, "keep 'em! Keep 'em, lad! Guard!" The dog's answer echoed back across the water.

The launch made no long stay when the Gunters had been landed on the Colsingford road. Cummings was there—Cummings and what he called the navy. A strange assortment—dinghies and punts and more precarious skiffs. There was a small coal lighter, he told Simmons, coming from Cromley on a forester's float. Mitchett's and Low Farm? Evacuated. All safe, but some a bit damp in body and spirit. Yes, Mrs. Wilkinson was mothering the refugees. But there were cattle everywhere, it seemed.

"I know," said Simmons. "We must get busy on that. I'm off to fetch a couple of horses out of Riverside. See you here? Where's Morgan got to? Come on, Gunter. Take them up to the Manor, will you, Mrs. Gunter? Right away!"

They got the horses aboard at last. There is a *saga*, sung and embroidered over pint pots in Brakeshire village inns, that tells how three weary men magicked two horses, blindfold but fright-mad and kicking all ways, through a bedroom window into a motor launch. They did it somehow—came back with Morgan and Gunter sitting on a head apiece, and Simmons at the tiller. And perhaps because success brought rashness, he drove the *Watersprite* across a snag, and ripped the bottom out of her a hundred yards from home. They swam, horses and men, and waded and struggled to the helping boats.

Morning and afternoon the navy's work went on. Simmons had commandeered a punt with an Evinrude, and all day long its impudent, staccato popping echoed across the floods. The punt, he found,

would bear him over the shallows that had barred the *Watersprite*.

It was Simmons, with his indefatigable motor punt, who reunited Gunter and the faithful Jack. The dog had been standing on a bullock's back, belly-deep even so, for some four hours.

When experiment had proved the impossibility of hauling bullocks over the freeboard of the empty lighter, it was Simmons who set the fashion of wading among the bullocks and roping them one by one, to be towed, swimming, across deep water and led through the shallows. Once, as he stood in water above his waist, knotting a rope about a trembling neck, he saw the white of the terrified eye that rolled back to watch him, and he bared chattering teeth in a smile, remembering that he had always hidden a secret fear of cows.

Cummings, a hard master to the sweating lighter gang, had emptied Mitchett's and Low Farm of all that could be salvaged. Riverside farm had gone. Even before the *Watersprite* arrived, the Gunters had felt the south wall sink on its water-scoured foundations. Later it had cracked and crumbled, and now only the empty shell of half the house showed above water.

It had been to Cummings that the last rescue of livestock fell. A waterman from Cromley, scouting alone in a punt, had found the remnants of a flock of sheep hidden behind a coppice, only their heads above water. The lighter shipped them—a herculean task that called for derricks and was done by tired men's arms.

It was over at last. There was nothing more that could be saved. They beached the boats on the strip of turf that was already widening between the water and the road. Too tired to talk, they straggled silently by twos and threes towards the Manor House.

In the billiard-room Simmons put down the telephone receiver and turned to Cummings. They looked at each other and shook with noiseless laughter that was agony to strained muscles. So far as mud and water were concerned, and ragged clothing, and unspeakable dishevelment, it might have been a mirror that each was facing. "You!" Simmons gasped, in weak attempt at explanation.

"And you!" said Cummings.

A girl stood in the doorway, looking at them interrogatively, a comely creature, jumpered and tweed-skirted. "It's awful cheek," she said, "our barging in like this,



but we've been here all day, really—mother and Mrs. Blaze and I. I'm Sylvia Ransome, from Dene House. We brought some things along in the car, and we've been giving a hand with the refugees. And the animals. I say"—she began to laugh, and it struck Simmons for the first time that she was pretty—"do you know that there are three sick sheep in the smoking-room—and a calf? And the cattle are in the stables, and the garage, and Heaven knows where besides."

Simmons grinned amiably. He had a whisky and soda in one hand and a pipe in the other, and his mouth was full of sandwich. "Good!" he said with lamentable indistinctness. And then, after an effort: "As long as they are inside, poor brutes! I'm just going to go round——"

"But look here"—friendly consternation sounded in her voice, and for a moment the woman in her peeped out of her rather boyish eyes—"look here, you're absolutely done! You mustn't actually kill yourself, must he, Mr. Cummings? Oughtn't you to have a bath and get to bed? Or change, and have a rest, anyway? Really, you look dead."

Simmons leant his aching back against the wall. "I'm all right," he answered, "though it's very decent of you. The vet. will be here from Cromley in a minute, and I must just take him round and see what can be done. Won't take me long, with any luck." He shuffled stiffly towards the door, but stopped midway, with a hand on the side of the billiard-table. "I don't suppose," he said in sudden anguish, "that you've had a bite of food since you came here. Cummings, do see about some tea, old chap. Tell 'em to bring it in the smoking—Heavens! No. Sheep. Have it in here,

then, unless there's a fire in the drawing-room."

Sylvia Ransome stood aside to let him pass. "I hope," he said to her, "you won't have to go before I'm free? Really, I ought to thank. . . ." His voice receded down the corridor. "Astonishingly decent." She followed him with kindling eyes.

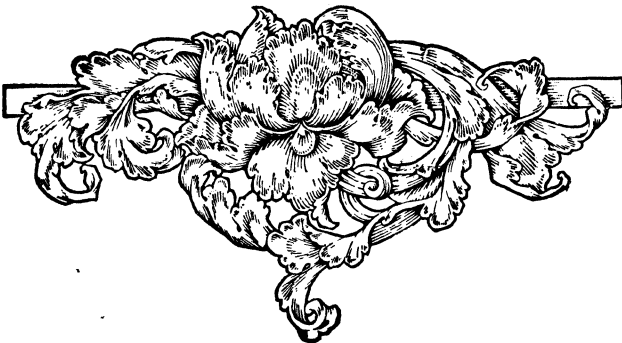
Simmons walked slowly down the steps to the drive. It was getting dark already, he noticed, but the rain had stopped. The vet.'s car ought to be along by now. Was that the sound of it out on the road? He shivered, wishing the whisky's warmth had lasted longer.

What a day! And not quite over yet. Well, no point in letting half the rescued animals die. One had to lend a hand. There was a responsibility. Who was it had said that? It didn't matter. Too tired for riddles, anyway. Jolly girl, that Sylvia Whatsername. He wished the vet. would come.

A car's headlights shone at the end of the drive. Simmons straightened his back and sighed. He rubbed his cold hands together, and looked for matches for his pipe. Just once round the place with him, he thought, to see he's thoroughly on the job, and has whatever he needs, and then—a bath, a hot, a terrifically hot bath, a change, and tea.

"Dash it," he said to himself, as he walked towards the car, "I have earned it, you know!"

He was cold and wet and hungry, he was stiff and sore and tired beyond words; and he realised, with a mild but puzzled surprise, that for the first time since Fate had contemptuously flicked him that astounding cheque, he was entirely happy.





# A MATTER FOR INTERFERENCE

By A. M. BURRAGE

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

EDWARD HODDINALL gulped down his last cup of coffee and hastily left the breakfast-table, reflecting that his wife showed admirable discretion in taking the first meal of the day in her room. His two sons were ever prone to argue, but never were they so vindictive as over the breakfast-table. He knew that they meant nothing by it, that they were, beneath it all, as good friends as any other pair of brothers; but the constant exchange of repartee, bright as it sometimes was, wrought havoc with his nerves.

Left alone with his younger brother, Bill Hoddinall, aged twenty-two, regarded him with an expression of sorrow and scorn. Reggie was seventeen and still at school, or would have been there but for the summer vacation.

"You're becoming an effete little beast," said Bill. "Why didn't you come for a swim with me this morning?"

"I hoped you'd drown yourself," Reggie retorted pleasantly. "If I'd been there, decency would have compelled me to attempt a rescue."

"What! In real cold water?"

"Oh, shut up, you ass! I had a cold bath this morning."

"Oh, did you? Funny there was no hot water left when I came back and wanted to shave."

"I didn't know it was your day for shaving," said Reggie politely.

Bill rose majestically and, going to the sideboard, proceeded to carve himself another slice of ham.

"If you weren't an idiot," he remarked, "you'd know that a man of my age has to shave every day. What are you going to do this morning? Going down to the nets?"

"No."

"There you are! Father's as anxious

about your cricket as I am, and pays your subscription to the town club, and you won't take the fag to practise. You'd find several of the ground staff who'd be only too glad to bowl to you, but no—you won't trouble! If you think I'm proud of having a brother who goes in seventh wicket down for the second eleven, you're jolly well mistaken. I had my colours when I was your age, and knocked up sixty-four against the M.C.C."

Reggie looked up at the ceiling with an air of abstraction.

"I may be wrong," he said reflectively, "but I'm almost sure I've heard you say something like that before. Only it's been growing a bit. It began at forty-four, if I remember. I suppose, in a couple of years' time it'll be a century. I mean, it's shaping that way, isn't it?"

"Yes. And I suppose in about a couple of minutes you'll get your head smacked. I mean, you're shaping that way, aren't you?"

Reggie shook his head.

"Force!" he murmured. "Brute force! The curse of the age! My brother is taller and larger than I—as I remember reading in one of my first French exercises. On the other hand, I, dear brother, occupy a strategic position within easy reach of the poker."

"Well, don't talk a lot of rot, then," said Bill. "What are you going to do this morning?"

"If you must know—and I don't know why you must—I rather thought of running over to the Greenways."

Bill stared at him and groaned aloud.

"I thought as much. Oh, Heavens, can't you let that wretched girl alone? Upon my word, Reggie, you make me ill. You're seventeen, and instead of playing cricket and golf and—and things you ought to be



doing at your age—you go crawling after a midget flapper who ought to be playing with teddy bears in the schoolroom."

"Girls of fifteen," retorted Reggie, turning a bright pink, "don't play with teddy bears."

"Don't they? I stand corrected. You know much more about them than I do. But it's infernally precocious—that's what it is. Seventeen, and thinks himself in love!"

"I didn't say I thought——"



"He went off down the garden with Nelly. I expect they're playing. Would you like to make a four?"

"Oh, for Heaven's sake, don't blush! It makes you look more like a boiled owl than ever. I shall ask father to put a stop to it. It must be an awful nuisance to the Greenways to find you always in their garden like a stray dog."

"Yes, and there's another stray dog who's always there. Shouldn't we hate each other, Bill, if we were after the same bone?"

Bill stared at him fixedly.

"I don't think," he said coldly, "I've

ever heard a more vulgar remark than that. If that is a specimen of the manners you're learning, the school must have gone all to pieces since my time."

"It has never been the same since you left," Reggie retorted blandly. "But if you mean to tell me that you don't go to the Greenways' to see Eve——"

"Mr. Greenway and I," said Bill hastily, "have interests in common."

"Yes? I suppose you like listening to that story about the bulldog he always tells. It's rather long, of course, but for the first ten or twelve times one hears it——"

"Oh, don't be a fool! Of course Eve and I are quite good friends, but we're both older than you."

"Well, then, of course Nellie and I are

quite good friends, and we're both younger than you."

Bill ignored the fallacy, which seemed too trivial to destroy. Also he was not too sure which line of logic he ought to take.

"I'm going to tell Eve," he said, "not to let you come there and be a beastly nuisance. Love at your time of life! Why, it's preposterous!"

Reggie grinned behind his cup.

"Yes," he said, "I dare say you'd enjoy talking to Eve about it. Give you a chance



of opening up a rather difficult subject, what? Then you could go on to say, 'Of course, if they were both five years older, like us —,'"

Bill glowered at his young brother, and for a moment his jaw dropped. There were times when Reggie gave signs of possessing an almost uncanny intuition, and this was one of them. As a matter of fact, he had for some time been much exercised in his mind as to how he should prepare the way to telling the elder Miss Greenway the state of his affections, and it had occurred to him that if he could lead her into a discussion on love, and the absurdity of people younger than themselves imagining that they were in that blessed state, it might be rather a good opening.

"You silly young ass!" he retorted energetically. "I—er—never thought—er—of anything so—er—dashed silly."

"Oh—er—didn't you? Because—er—I—er—rather thought you—er—did. Well, good luck, Bill! But even if dear Eve loves her sweet little William, you're going to bump up against a bit of a snag, you know."

"What do you mean?"

"Only this. I heard Father saying to Mother the other day that he hoped you weren't going to make a fool of yourself with that girl. And Mother said it was only an attack of calf-love."

"You're making that up!" said Bill, highly scandalised.

"I swear I'm not. And Father said he hoped it was, because you wouldn't be earning anything for years, and the Greenways wouldn't let Eve, a girl of twenty, enter into an indefinite engagement."

Having delivered this deadly shot, Reggie rose up from the table and began to fold his napkin.

"Never mind, Bill," he said cheerfully, "the course of true love never did run smooth. In about four years' time, if you work hard, you'll be called to the Bar. Then, if you're any good at oiling up to solicitors, you may be in a position to marry about ten years from now. You'll be thirty-two then, and Eve will be thirty. Nice sensible ages, unless somebody snaps her up first. You see, I don't laugh at *you*. It all seems to me to be very suitable if she'll only wait. Well, so long!"

In a voice which sounded almost hearty with wrath, Bill told his young brother where he might go.

"Certainly," said Reggie, retreating,

"and I'll bag the oven next to me for you, shall I?"

## II.

BILL gave his brother half an hour's start before setting out. He, too, intended to visit the Greenways that morning, but he chose to pay his call unaccompanied. Reggie had scored more heavily than that sprightly youngster had guessed. Gloom and deep depression had settled upon Bill. He had all along been aware of the facts which Reggie had mentioned with so little regard for his feelings, but he had not enjoyed having them rubbed in. At twenty-two one does not necessarily regard facts as solid and insurmountable obstacles. Now he felt that only the sight of Eve could cheer him up.

The Greenways lived in a house similar to that of the Hoddinalls, on the outskirts of the same town—a solid house of red brick standing in about four acres, with a semi-circle of drive in front, such as house-agents persistently refer to as a carriage sweep. Luck was with Bill that morning. Eve was in the front garden, cutting geraniums, and he was spared the ordeal of going to the door and inquiring for her.

She was a tall, fair girl of the "chocolate box" type, pretty to some, slightly insipid to others. She greeted him cordially enough, giving him her hand, and he held it for a second longer than was exactly necessary; he was becoming quite adept at that.

"You left your racket here yesterday afternoon," Eve said. "I expect you've come for it?"

"Er—yes. Beastly careless of me!"

"Reggie left his here, too."

"I suppose he's here already?"

"Yes, he went off down the garden with Nelly. I expect they're playing. Would you like to make a four?"

He hesitated.

"Oh—er—yes, certainly, if you want to play, Eve."

"Right-o! You don't mind waiting while I sew a button on Father's old garden jacket? I promised I'd do it for him, and he'll be wanting it presently. Oh, first of all, though—we've got six darling kittens! They're in the loose box in the stable. Do come and see them!"

He acquiesced readily, although he took no interest in kittens, and opened the gate for her to precede him into the stable yard. Just inside the yard Eve halted and looked up the garden.

"They're not playing tennis. I wonder where on earth they've got to?"



"Mooning around somewhere, I s'pose," said Bill. "We shall find them presently."

"Well, they can't get lost," Eve agreed, laughing, and opened the stable door.

In the loose box he was shown six shivering morsels of black fur, and a feline mamma who paused in the act of licking one of them to miau at the intrusion.

"Aren't they sweet?" exclaimed Eve. "Father wants to have some of them drowned, but I'm not going to have it. I can find good homes for all of them. You'd like one, wouldn't you?"

"I'd like anything you gave me," said her devoted slave, with a great deal of expression. "I—I'll always treasure it and—er—see that it has plenty of milk, and all that. Thanks ever so much, Eve. I wanted something to cheer me up. I've been feeling rather pipped this morning."

"Why, what's the matter with you?" she asked in a tone which was more than half caressing.

He drew nearer to her. Her manner was plainly inviting, yet he shirked riding straight to his fence. He was a shy youth, and needed some subtle manœuvre to lead him up to his first essay in love-making.

"I wanted to talk to you about young Reggie," he said. "I'm afraid he's getting a beastly nuisance."

"I dare say you find him a bit trying sometimes," said Eve lightly. "Is that what's been upsetting you?"

"Good Heavens, no—not *that*! But I was thinking that he must be a pretty frightful nuisance to you and your people—always round here, and all that."

"Oh, nobody takes any notice of him. He's always with Nelly."

"That's just the point. Do you know the young idiot thinks he's in love with her?"

Eve bubbled over.

"Does he? What fun!"

"I don't know so much. It makes him look pretty ridiculous, you know. And your people might easily be annoyed."

"I don't think they are," said Eve indifferently. "Nelly seems to like him, and nobody else seems to mind."

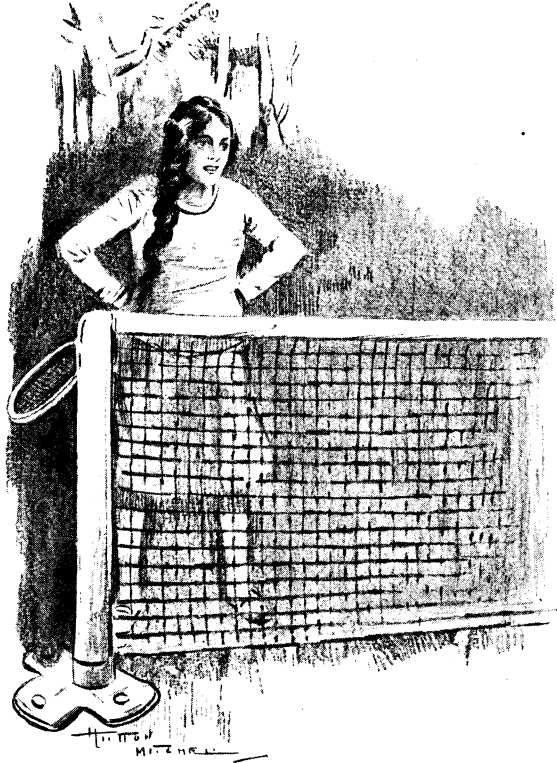
"It's—it's awfully decent of all of you," said Bill, a little nonplussed for the moment. "But don't you think it's absurd for a mere kid of seventeen to—to think he's serious?"

Eve only smiled.

"He'll find out the difference when he's as old as I am," Bill added darkly.

"Why?" she asked innocently. "Are you in love?"

No maiden could have been kinder in thus helping him. He answered at first with a low groan. The air seemed suddenly to be highly charged with electricity. Somehow a loose box seemed to be the wrong setting for a declaration of love. He had always imagined himself doing justice to the situation in evening clothes—tails for choice—



"Who is it?" gurgled Nelly. "Not Dolly Chambers?"

in a softly-lit conservatory, with a good band playing the Barcarolle from "Tales of Hoffmann" in an adjacent room. Alas, never the time and the place and the loved one all together! But the stable was not without its points. It was at least private.

"Are you really in love?" said Eve, with a slight catch in her voice. "What fun?"

"It's anything but fun!" he retorted severely.

"But who is it? Not Dolly Chambers?"

"You're ragging me, aren't you?" he retorted miserably. "Oh, Eve!"

How it happened he hardly knew. He



must have held out his arms to her there, in the dusk of the stables, and she had crept into them and rested there, warm and tremulous, like a snared bird. For a long moment she hid her lips from him, bending her slim neck and holding her head down tightly so that he had only her soft hair to kiss. But presently, in response to his pleading, she lifted her face and gave him what he sought.

In the intoxication of the moment it is to be feared that Bill said many things which he would not have cared to be reminded of afterwards. It would not be fair to repeat them here, and, anyhow, most of us have—but that's neither here nor there. Suffice it that he said all that any reasonable girl

any doubts about it and put her threat into execution. After ten minutes in the clouds they came gently back to earth.

"I say," he exclaimed, "I'm afraid it will be some time before I shall be able to think of getting married."

"I'll wait for you," said Eve.

"You angel! But your people——"

"I don't think that they'd consent to an engagement yet. They'd say we were too young."

"So would mine. I say, Eve!"

"Yes, darling?"

"Of course I don't want to do anything underhand, but if we say anything about this they may try to stop us from seeing one another. We won't have a proper engagement—we'll have an understanding. But of course I shall consider myself engaged to you."

"So shall I," whispered Eve. "And we'll keep it a secret for the present, won't we?"

"A dead secret, darling. Nobody will ever guess!"

She started suddenly.

"That button! I really must run and put it on, Billy, darling. Will you come with me, or will you go and find the others?"

"I'll come with you," he answered promptly

### III.

BILL devoured Eve with his eyes as she sat in the morning-room, attaching a button to her father's

old garden coat. Already he could imagine that they had been married many long, happy years, and it was his own coat over which her deft fingers plied. The task, which should have been a short one, took time, because it is difficult to sew while one is being kissed, and Eve ceased work to listen to him attentively each time he tried to tell her how beautiful she was. It was during one of these interludes that, her gaze



"Bill suddenly saw red."

would have expected from him as a first attempt. And Eve was quite reasonable.

Her utterances, if slightly less exaggerated than his, were highly satisfactory to him. She repeated several times that she loved her big Bill, and could never, never dream of loving anybody else. She said that if he hadn't loved her she would have faded away and died, which caused him to put a sort of ju-jitsu hold on her in case she had



straying through the window and across the garden, she beheld Reggie and Nelly.

"Oh, there they are!" she cried. "They're just going to start a game. We'd better play, too, hadn't we? It'll look better."

"All right," he agreed without enthusiasm.

"Well, run out and tell them, like a dear, not to start. I'll be out in a minute, and then you and I can take them on."

"Right-o," said Bill, and tore himself away from her beloved presence.

On arriving at the tennis court, where his brother and Nelly stood talking by the net, he perceived at once that they were enjoying some private joke. Their faces were red, as if with much laughter, their eyes moist, and even now it was evident that they only contained their mirth with a great deal of difficulty. Nelly, a short, plump, tow-haired minx, pretty, considering that she was at an awkward age, had to puff out her cheeks to keep her mouth straight.

"Eve's coming out," Bill announced coldly, "then we'll all four have a game. What are you grinning about, Reggie, you young ass?"

"It's awfully decent of you," said Reggie. "But don't you think it's absurd for a mere kid of seventeen to—to think he's serious?"

Bill started and stared. A chord of memory was touched. He seemed to have heard those very words before: quite probably he had uttered them himself. He often said such things to Reggie. He was about to make some curt retort when the conduct of Nelly distracted him. That precocious child was making languishing eyes at Reggie, and there was a strong air of burlesque in the manner of her doing it.

"Are you really in love?" she asked. "What fun!"

Bill's mouth fell agape. He began to feel hot and cold in quick sequences.

"It's anything but fun!" Reggie replied.

He ended with a groan, and would have said it quite creditably had it not been for a snort of laughter in the middle.

"Who is it?" gurgled Nelly. "Not Dolly Chambers?"

Bill suddenly saw red.

"You young devils!" he burst out

Reggie held up a hand, after the manner of a policeman stopping traffic.

"Hush!" he said. "A lady is present."

The lady sank down on the grass and began to kick. Bill faced his brother in a fury. Just at that moment he felt capable of tearing Reggie limb from limb. Every word he had uttered in the loose box forced itself back upon his memory and gave him almost physical torture.

"You little rat!" he gasped. "I'll murder you for this! I'll teach you to listen! It's a dirty, mean trick!"

"There's a loft over the stable," Reggie said blandly, by way of explanation.

"I k-k-keep my r-r-rabbits there," explained Nelly, who was now nearly sobbing with joy.

"Why didn't you cough or call out, then?" cried Bill, conscious that his face was now the colour of a new pillar-box.

"We didn't know you were going to say anything private. You started talking about the kittens. We didn't know what you were going to say, did we, Nelly?"

"Not until you started," gurgled Nelly. "And then—oh, wasn't it killing?"

Bill could not trust himself to speak to her. Even for Eve's sake he did not know how he was going to endure that atrocious child as a sister-in-law. But suddenly he saw Reggie advancing towards him, and remarked something ingratiating in the boy's manner.

"I say, Bill—I'm awfully sorry. I swear I am. And neither Nelly nor I will say a word about it. We won't give you away—really, we won't."

"Of course," said Bill, still a little sourly, "if you're prepared to mind your own business—"

"I was thinking we might both try that," said Reggie meaningly, "just to see how it worked. Oh, *cavé*, here's Eve!"

\* \* \* \* \*

After breakfast on the following morning Edward Hoddinall, as usual, took the morning papers up to his wife.

"I can't think what's come over the boys," he said. "They've been quite polite to one another all through breakfast, and Bill's just insisted on giving Reggie his old camera."





"Some thieving striped squirrels came on a burglarious expedition to their garden city."

# THE WONDERFUL WEAVER

By LIEUT.-COLONEL GORDON CASSERLY, F.R.G.S.

ILLUSTRATED BY WARWICK REYNOLDS

FROM every branch of the low thorny trees rising out of the long grass of a jungle in Central India fluffy lemon-shaped, yellow balls hung swaying in the wind. There were scores of them, each suspended by a foot-long fibre cordage; and the underneath end of each ball lengthened out into a tube a couple of inches in diameter and six to ten inches long. And in and out of the open mouths of these tubes little brown and yellow birds fluttered incessantly, keeping up a ceaseless chirping. Darting swiftly through the air each would head for a particular tube, close its wings and with the impetus of its flight shoot into and up the swaying vertical passage with an astonishing accuracy of aim. They were weaver birds and the hanging golden globes were their nests.

A tiny cock, gay in his mating plumage of

yellow on head and breast, contrasting with the brown feathers everywhere else, sped like a living flame between the trees and, without checking his pace, shot up through the narrow entrance into the heart of his home and took his seat beside his soberly-clad mate on a loop of grass fastened across the nest from side to side as a perch. Two tiny featherless chicks lifted gaping beaks to be fed, and the little father deftly thrust the morning meal into them. Then, swinging side by side, the proud parents gazed fondly down on their nestlings, surely the loveliest in the colony around them.

To an unprejudiced eye they were not at all remarkable, but they improved as the days passed and the feathers came; and then the little brother and sister, Baya and Bayi they were called, promised to be as pretty a pair of weaver birds as any in India.



Their education began early, for they would mature rapidly and no time was to be lost. They had much to learn, those heavenly twins in their swaying mansion between earth and sky.

They had to know what was good for them to eat, and where it was to be found, where food grew free and where it had to be sought in the fields of ripening grain, where fledglings must learn how to dodge the miserly humans who planted it and grudged it to hungry little birds. They were taught how on the wing to snap up flying termites, and how to dine daintily on scurrying insects on the ground.

They were told of the many perils to their kind in the jungle, danger on high from swooping hawk by day and murderous owl by night, in the trees from silently-crawling snakes and cruel, nest-robbing monkeys, on the ground from the ever-present serpent again and its ordained enemy Man, who would yet turn aside from his eternal feud with it to slay harmless little feathered things.

Above all, they had to acquire the rudiments of the wonderful art that distinguishes their species from all other birds in creation, the art of literally weaving the nest that makes them the master architects and builders of the feathered race. The tailor bird is but a bungler compared with them.

Baya and his sister had plenty of leisure for learning. For they were born in the monsoon, the rainy season of India that begins late in June and continues into October, bringing storms of such intensity as the dwellers in temperate zones luckily never know. Storms that lasted twenty or thirty hours without a lull. Lightnings that incessantly patterned the black sky with a woven network of fire, thunder that shook the world. Rain that rattled on the ground like bullets and, never stopping day and night, deluged the thirsty earth. It melted the frail structures of humans. Mud walls of brown man's hut and white man's bungalow collapsed. It swelled the rivers until in their rage they swept away bridges, roads and railways, and flooded cities.

Beneath the dripping trees of the jungle hungry beasts of prey and harmless deer cowered miserably before the lash of its fury; and the bear shook its glistening drops from his thick fur ere he entered his cave, resolved not to venture forth again until its violence had abated. But ceaseless, drenching as it was, the weaver chicks knew nothing of it; for the wonderful nests that

their careful parents had built for them were proof against the heaviest downpour, and never a drop splashed the soft down and springing feathers of Baya and Bayi.

Their practical education began on the day when, amidst great excitement and after much coaxing and persuasion, each in turn was pushed and bunted on to the grass-loop perch and clung to it, at first timorously, but soon with growing confidence and pride in their achievement. But that was nothing to the exultation that filled their little breasts when, during a break in the rains, they dared the Great Adventure for the first time, scrambled and slid down the entrance-tunnel, spread their wings and flew, actually flew, to the ground below. Their anxious father and mother fluttered about them, heaping advice and instructions on them; while all around scores of equally fussy parents watched the first flight and awkward hops of their offspring with fear and pride.

Suddenly there was a shrill chirp of alarm, a cloud of little birds old and young rose swiftly into the air, and the thick, ungainly snake gliding with murderous intent through the grass, the waving stems of which had betrayed its passage, raised its deadly head to gaze disappointedly with cold, unwinking eyes and find none left on the ground to slay. Then in fury it poured its heavy coils over the damp soil and went in search of less wary prey. It was a Russell's viper, as deadly a poison-bearer as any in Asia; and as it slid away the feathered elders bade their offspring mark it well and beware of it and its kin ever afterwards.

Before the hot sun of October warmed the world and made the steaming earth give back to the skies the moisture that they had lent it, the young brood were promoted to be their own food-getters. In swarms they flew about the jungle and visited the ill-tilled fields around a village of mud huts, in which lived the poor peasants who scratched up the ground with wooden ploughs dragged by skinny oxen and sowed the seed advanced them by fat Hindu usurers with hearts harder than the stony soil. But when the gods were kind and sent a good rainy season, even these wretched fields produced a crop of maize with ten-foot stalks for little birds to cling to as they pecked the grain out of the long ears.

Flying insects found tombs in eager beaks. Groundlings died in hosts; and the luscious white ants had to camouflage their trails



against the quick eyes of Baya and his brethren by plastering at night the bark of the trees up and down which they climbed with a coating of clay beneath which they made their roads for daylight travel.

Under the admiring gaze of his sister, Baya had begun his sporting career, when barely fledged, by a desperate encounter with a big red ant that disputed his right of way along a branch of their natal tree. Heredity egged him on to the combat; but the ugly look of the vicious insect, undauntedly threatening its big foe with its poisonous mandibles, made him hesitate. He chirped a careless aside to Bayi to the effect that the many-legged object did not look good to eat; but the sister, safely perched well out of the way, urged him on, and, nerving himself for a desperate effort, he ended the fight and the red ant's life with a swift peck.

Flushed with the surprisingly easy victory, he took to waging war on the insects that swarmed on the warm earth, the excitement of the chase making them a more acceptable diet than the seeds and grain that were the usual food of his fellows. His elders repeatedly warned him of the dangers that lurked on the ground; but, as obstinate Youth will do, he went his own way and soon had cause to repent. For it led to the unwelcome renewal of acquaintance with the Russell's viper before long.

"The Elegant Daboia" this terror of the jungle is named by men of science, more for the design and vivid colouring of its markings than for its shape; for it lacks the usual devilish grace of its evil tribe and is thick and clumsy and ends stumpily, instead of tapering off into a slender tail. But when the time of year comes for it to shed its skin and, slipping out of the shimmering gossamer sheath, it stands revealed in its new scaly armour, the regular design of brilliant vermilion diamonds and lozenges on the reddish-brown ground of its new covering is truly remarkable.

Baya, however, did not admire Daboia at all. On this occasion he was busily engaged with a line of scurrying ants; and, hopping here, there, and everywhere as his assaults broke up their formation, he was too engrossed in dealing death to others to see it approach himself. It was drawing very near him, for cautiously, noiselessly Daboia crawled towards him and had got almost within striking distance without the busy little bird seeing him. The ungainly reptile silently drew its head back and

balanced it quiveringly for the swift, death-dealing lunge. Baya's fate seemed sealed.

At the last moment sisterly affection saved him. Bayi had missed her brother from among the swarm of her companions and had flown in search of him. Seeing him, she had at the same time marked the movement in the grass that spoke of danger. Her shrill warning startled Baya; and he shot up straight into the air, as with a dull thud the baffled snake struck the ground where he had been like the lash of a heavy whip.

The indignant bird flew to the nearest tree and, safely perched on a high branch, hopped with rage on it and told the Elegant One exactly what he thought of him. But the snake, his stroke missed, lay supine for a few moments, the forked tongue darting incessantly in and out of his cruel mouth between the poison fangs, trying to sense the whereabouts of the escaped quarry. Then, realising his failure, the deadly reptile glided away with the air of cold detachment of his kind.

A swarm of little weaver birds had heard Bayi's shrill note of alarm and flew up to learn the cause. Daboia had disappeared; so, being too late to add their remarks about him to Baya's insults, they turned on their comrade, still agitated by his narrow escape, and freely expressed their opinion of a bird that considered himself too good to associate with his kind and feed as and where they did. Then they flew contemptuously away. But the sympathising Bayi and her particular friend, a trim little hen called Chirya, remained to condole the unhappy hero.

After this incident Baya hated more than ever Daboia and all the snake race. If he detected any of them stalking its prey, he took a malicious pleasure in spoiling the hunt by hovering over it and crying a warning to the quarry.

There was a viper that lived in a hole in the bank of a stream on which stood a cluster of thorny trees serving some of the weaver family to hang their nests on. She was of a different species to Daboia, less gaudily marked by Nature, but more agile and gracefully made. She was named Carinata, and she was a very deadly menace to little birds. For she used to climb trees and plunder nests, devouring eggs and fledglings pitilessly, while the distracted feathered parents fluttered helplessly above her, begging in vain for mercy. The cunningly-made weaver dwellings were safe from her, owing to the difficulty of



approaching them. Baya knew and detested her, and often when she was hunting on the ground he was the cause of her losing a meal. She hissed hate and revenge like any stage villain; but the small hero judged himself safe from her machinations, and paid no heed to her threats.

The cold weather, as winter is termed in India, came with its warm dry days and the chilly nights when little birds huddle together for warmth in the trees. The golden nests, deserted and desolate now, swung idly in the breeze, while their late tenants flew busily about the jungle. The youngsters that they had sheltered were out to see all that they could of this world so new to them; for they felt that there was much to learn, much to do, on this generous earth which provided such good things for hungry birds. To them the winter was a pleasant season, for they had not to fear the snow and starvation that menaced their kind in northern latitudes.

Baya consorted generally with companions of his own sex, although at times he deigned to associate with his sister and Chirya with the condescension of the superior male. But he liked best of all to wander alone, leading a happy, improvident life and finding his daily bread with little exertion, while around him the continual struggle for existence went on without affecting him. His own father fell a victim to a hawk and several of his friends perished variously; that is the way of the wild, and he bore it philosophically. For Death is always busy in the jungle. The flying insects that escaped his beak found a more lingering end in a spider's web. An ant that had successfully hidden from him under a dry leaf went on its way rejoicing, only to fall into a tiny conical pit, the sandy sides of which gave way under its feet, when it tried to struggle up, and sent it sliding down into the formidable jaws of an ant-lion hiding at the bottom.

Death comes to all, great or small, in time; but so far Baya's insignificance was his salvation. For him the fiercest beasts held no menace. Often he perched fearlessly on a tree under which a tiger lay sheltering from the noonday sun, licking his reddened chops and snarling viciously at the hungry vultures that swooped down impatiently at the torn carcase of the deer lying near him, only to rocket up again into the air at sight of him.

Unafraid, Baya watched a panther stealing soft-footed through the under-

growth towards a small four-horned antelope feeling unconscious of the doom drawing near on velvet paw.

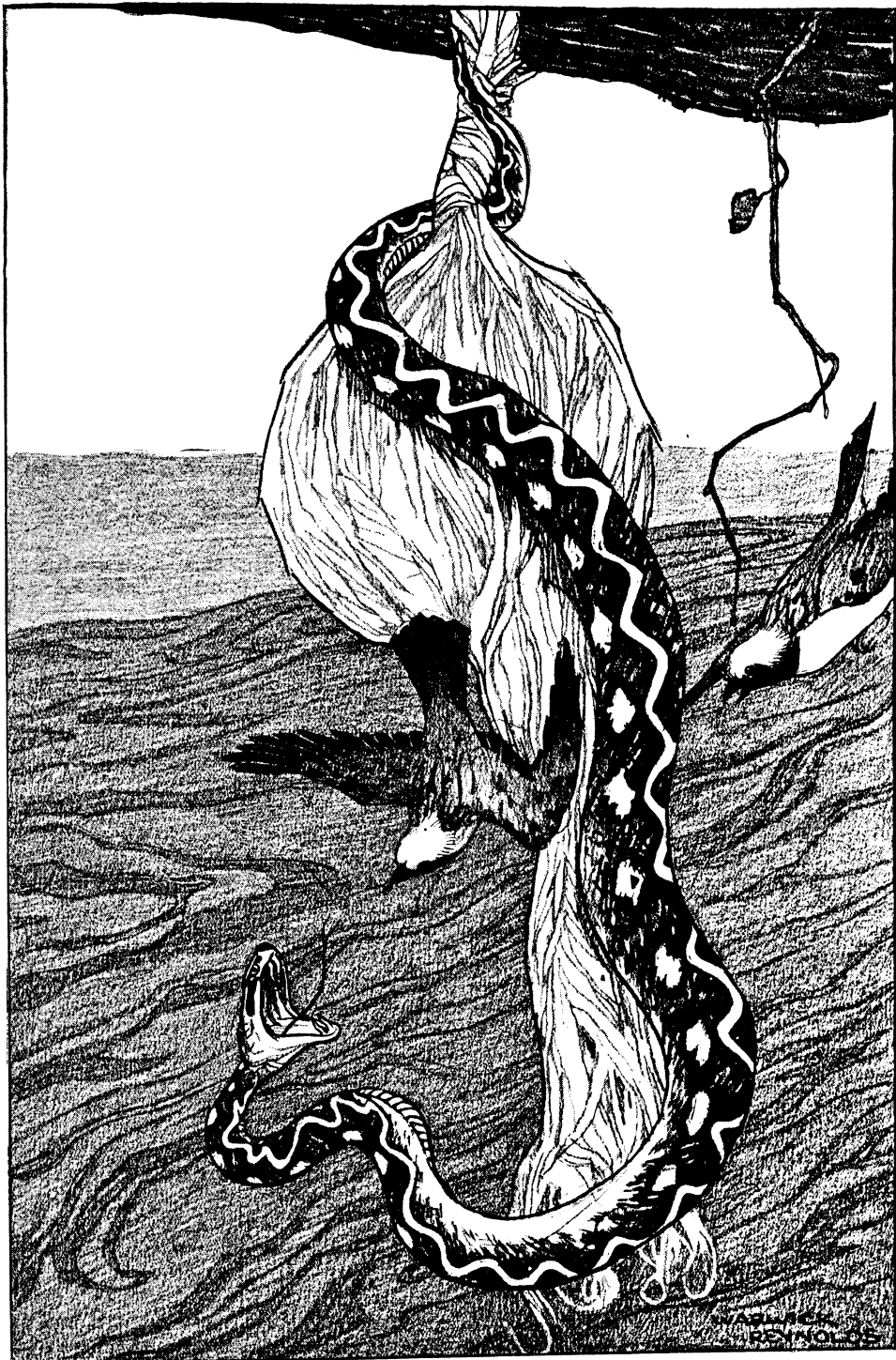
One day the little bird, perching on a bough of a big tree, was disturbed by a black bear climbing awkwardly along the branch to reach what looked like a large lump of clay hanging from it. This was a wild bees' nest. Baya, far from resenting the coming of the clumsy brute, welcomed it, for he foresaw pickings. He settled on a twig overhead and watched the bear clawing at the nest to detach it from the bough against which it was firmly plastered. A cloud of bees flew out and circled around the thief, who raised himself until the white horseshoe mark on his chest showed, the mark that hunters pray to see, and slapped at the angry insects with his great paws. In spite of the brave efforts of the little defenders the nest fell and was shattered to pieces on the ground.

Then the bear climbed down in leisurely fashion and feasted on the spilled honey, indifferent to the assaults of its maddened owners, who accompanied him in a whirlwind of fury when he shambled away at last. And then the grateful Baya and his brethren flew down to pick up the crumbs from his table and devour the grubs in the broken cells.

Whenever the black-faced, grey-whiskered langur apes leaped booming through the branches or the mischievous little brown monkeys swung by hand and foot through the tree-tops, Baya did not stand upon the order of his going, but went at once. For it was not wise to linger within reach of the clutching claws that pilfer eggs and tear wee nestlings to pieces. But these were the only animals that were a danger to Baya now; all others left him alone, and even Man did not trouble him and his companions as long as they kept out of the cultivation. But in the air there was always the menace of the hawks, and constant vigilance was the price of safety.

During the cold weather months the twins grew rapidly. "Early to bed and early to rise" was unconsciously their motto, as it is that of all well-behaved little birds. Only the evil-doing owls, which hide in hollow trees from honest daylight, and the silly bats sheltering in the dark chambers of the old ruin that had once been a Mogul viceroy's palace, and now was submerged in the green sea of jungle vegetation, stayed out during the dark hours and turned night into day. They and those fruit-stealers,





‘Loosening her coils on branch and cord, she struck furiously at him.’



the absurd-looking flying-foxes, which spent the sunny hours hanging upside down in clusters in the trees, dozing, grumbling and quarrelling even in their sleep, awaking occasionally to elbow their neighbours from their hold and chatter shrill abuse and insults until the sun set and the shades of evening sent them flapping on leathery wings to raid gardens.

When the first warm wind in the lengthening days told of the coming of the hot weather, the brother and sister were quite a mature pair, as jaunty a little cock and as trim a little hen as any in the jungle. And soon the former, to his delight, began to change his sober livery of brown for gayer hues; for the plumage on crown and breast became a bright yellow, Nature's adornment of the male to attract the other sex in the mating season now commencing. Baya was astonished to find that his insignificant little sister seemed suddenly very popular with his comrades; but he was more surprised when he discovered that his own indifference to hen-birds was vanishing. Chirya, who had hitherto appeared to him scarce worthy of his notice, developed unsuspected charms; and, after casting a critical eye over the other females of his acquaintance, he finally decided that she was to be the fortunate lady whom he would honour by the bestowal of his affection. So he strutted and swaggered in front of her to let her admire all his good points and realise how lucky she was to win him.

It was a distinct shock when he found that he was not to have it all his own way; for another little cock commenced to pay his addresses to her. Such presumption was not to be borne, so Baya challenged his rival to mortal combat. In the presence of the flattered lady they fought it out bravely, battling in the air, through the trees, down on the ground and up again, with a fierceness amazing in such little warriors.

Victory rested with Baya, and he accepted condescendingly Chirya's congratulations on it. She coyly intimated that it was just as she had wished; but the little flirt would probably have welcomed the other as warmly if he had been the winner. But this the proud conqueror never suspected, and would not have believed if he had been told it. He found, however, that it was not all plain sailing even now—that a suitor has to do more than merely fight for his lady's favour. He must make love, too. So the enamoured Baya sidled up to Chirya on a

remote branch and chirped compliments into her not unwilling ear, until the coy little hen came to the conclusion that enough had been done for maiden modesty and that she could afford to yield now.

Prouder of this victory than even the last, Baya flew about the colony to tell the great news to his friends. No one listened to him. All the other cock-birds were doing the same, while the hens sat together and confided to each other "what he said" and "what I said"—and none of them listened, either.

A prospective husband must provide a home for his bride and the family to come, so Baya had to get busy. He set about looking for a suitable tree on which to build the nest; and everywhere he went he told all the jungle of the success of his love affair. He flew over Carinata, lying coiled up at the entrance to her hole in the bank of the ravine, in which the stream had shrunk to a thread.

"*Ahré*, O Poison One, rejoice with me. My mating is nigh. There will be more little birds to laugh at thee from their nest that will be safe against thee and thy evil brood," he cried derisively.

He perched on the tree above her, amused at her impotent anger as she glared up at him with unwinking eyes and answered only by a hiss of deadly hate. An idea struck him.

"Why, I love the sight of thee so much, O Eater of Frogs, that I would gladly gaze upon thee every day," he continued. "Here in this tree above thy lair will I build my home, so that my chicks, too, may feast their eyes on thy beauty."

The tree was a thorny one and held many of last year's nests. Baya selected a branch that leaned well over the ravine and marked the place on it where he would weave his habitation. Then with a flirt of the tail he flew off to tell his sweetheart about it, while Carinata glided into her dark dwelling and meditated revenge.

She saw him and his bride every day after that; for, true to his word, he and Chirya began to construct their nest just where he had said. And they never flew over the viper without some jeering remark that served almost to heat the cold blood in her.

Weaver birds are gregarious, and the young pair told their acquaintances of the spot that they had chosen, and were followed to it by many of their colony, who, finding their tree and the others near it to their



liking, selected building sites in them. And among them was Bayi with her newly-wed mate. Soon every branch was hung with as many nests as there was room for, and all around the jungle rang with the ceaseless chirping of flocks of busy little weavers preparing their future dwellings.

Some of the birds were shirkers and contented themselves with patching up last year's abandoned homes. But our young honeymooners would have nothing second-hand, and determined to construct the cunningest and cosiest little nest that ever weaver wove. Near by was a big patch of high, strong sarpal grass that offered them excellent material. To it Baya would fly, select a stout blade, cling head down to it and bite through the edge to the exact thickness that he required. Then he would go higher up the blade and, judging a suitable length, would nick the edge there, too, with his sharp beak. Finally he would return to the lower notch, seize firmly in his bill the edge of the grass just above it and fly away, and a strip between the two cuts in the edge would be torn off and carried away in the ingenious little weaver's beak.

He would find Chirya awaiting him impatiently at their tree, and the two would set to work at once with this strip of grass. It seemed incredible that these tiny birds should know by instinct how to plan and execute a structure of such ingenious design as the nest that began to grow down from the bough. Yet so firmly implanted in their race is the impulse to weave that in captivity they will plait cotton, wool, or other material given them in and out of the bars of their cages.

Our little home-builders began by weaving the solid cord by which the nest would be suspended, looping it firmly around the branch and then continuing it downwards for ten or twelve inches, clinging to it with firmly-clenched claws as it swung about in the wind, and using their beaks to work with. When a length of grass was used up, one bird would give the other a peck, and the latter would fly off to gather more material. They took it turn about; sometimes Baya, sometimes Chirya, would go to renew the supply. At the end of the cord they commenced the construction of the nest itself, making it somewhat in the shape of a lemon. They deliberated frequently as to exactly where the compartment in which the eggs were to be laid should come; and, as was right and proper, the lady had the deciding voice.

When this momentous question was settled they wove a strong transverse loop a little to one side of the centre of the nest, between the egg-chamber and the tubular entrance—that is to say, between the nursery and the hall. This was to serve as the perch to be used by the parents and, later, by the young chicks when they were old enough—the family sitting-room, in fact.

Hitherto both birds had worked and fetched material indiscriminately; but as soon as the loop was completed, Chirya took her seat on it and ever afterwards worked from inside the nest, leaving to her husband the task of bringing the grass and attending to the outside of the structure. Baya would fly up with the long strip of fibre streaming away behind him and settle on the half-completed home, clinging to it with hooked claws, one of which held the strip in position. Then, seizing the end of the grass in his beak, he would push it through the woven wall to Chirya, who, taking it in her beak, would insert it in its proper place in the web and push it through outwards back to him. And so the process of weaving went on. It took much time to complete the main portion of the nest, the egg-chamber and the tubular entrance. The fine work fell to Chirya's share, for she had carefully to smooth the interior, special attention being paid to the nursery, the walls of which had to be made soft as silk and the nest itself softer still.

While she was busy at this, Baya had leisure to rest. He was sitting on the branch idly watching the little home swaying jerkily in a high wind. From inside it came a fretful voice.

"Oh, do keep the thing still, Baya!" cried the invisible wife impatiently. "How can I work when I am being bumped about and swung round all the time? Can't you do something to stop it, instead of sitting there like a lazy good-for-nothing?"

All around in the jungle a million little wives were angrily saying the same thing, and a million little husbands were, like Baya, scratching puzzled heads with their claws and wondering what to do about it. And simultaneously it dawned upon them that the nests would not swing so much if they were weighted somehow; and promptly Baya and nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine prospective fathers flew down to the ground and fetched lumps of clay which they plastered on to the light structures to steady them. Baya dabbed as much as three ounces of mud on



to his in various spots. Jungle-dwelling natives in India believe that the wonderful weavers stick this clay on in order to fix fireflies in it to light up the nests at night; but, ingenious as these birds are, I do not think that they are as clever as all that.

Finally the entrance was elongated into a tube six inches in length and two in diameter; and Baya and his helpmate sat on a neighbouring branch and proudly contemplated the work of their beaks and claws. And then they flew away together for a little dinner of seeds and insects to celebrate its completion. And, passing over Carinata, they told her all about it and jokingly bade her welcome them as neighbours. But the snake, gazing coldly up with baleful eyes, answered never a word.

The young couple had their housewarming before the monsoon broke, so that its storms and drenching rain found them snugly installed in their weatherproof dwelling. And the eggs were duly laid, two of them, in a dry and cosy nursery; while outside the tempest roared and the ravine below was filled from bank to bank by a raging torrent of foam-flecked brown water. It reached a higher level than usual, and Carinata, returning from a foraging expedition one day, found her hole flooded and her brood of small vipers dead. So she climbed miserably into a tree and coiled her wet and shining length around a branch, while Baya mocked at her as he flew back from feeding in the rain to his dry and warm home.

Others of the colony of weaver birds did the same; but the time came when they repented of it, and when Baya had reason to congratulate himself on his foresight in building from a branch that hung well out over the stream. For once, when the clouds broke temporarily and the sun shone, some thieving striped squirrels came on a burglarious expedition to their garden city. They wanted material to build their own homes; so they climbed trees, cut off many nests on branches that hung above the dry land and, when these fell to the ground, picked them up and carried them off. Out of them the eggs had rolled, and Carinata glided up swiftly and devoured them, while the distracted parents hovered helplessly over her and Baya from his doorway loudly proclaimed her a murderess.

The nests on the boughs over the water were left untouched, so his dwelling was safe from the robbers.

But the time came when the viper's slow

brain had formulated a plan to be revenged for his many insults. She had never attacked a weaver bird's dwelling, for the cleverness of its design baffles the snake-race. But Carinata's hate made her forget that and fired her to attempt the impossible. One day her enemy shot out of his doorway, which was almost too small to allow him to pass, so swollen with importance was he; for, as he hastened to tell all his friends, from Chirya's eggs had emerged the two loveliest chicks in India. Derisively he told the news to Carinata, as he passed over her on his way to get food for the family and disappeared in the jungle.

The viper felt that her time had come. She climbed his tree and made her way along the branch from which his nest hung. At once a cloud of excited birds flew about her, shrieking warning, entreaty, abuse. Deaf to their outcry, she poised herself above her enemy's dwelling and considered how best to attack it. Only then she fully realised how difficult it would be to reach it. She must lower herself from the bough, winding her coils about the suspensory cord and the bulbous nest, and then turn upward again to penetrate the narrow tubular entrance. A slip would mean falling into the torrent below, which was in spate and swept along eddying and foaming like a mill-race. But her slow hate pushed her on; so she wound a coil around a branch and began to lower herself. And inside the nest poor little Chirya, who had learned of the approaching danger from the cries of her friends outside, sat trembling by her young and called vainly for her absent husband.

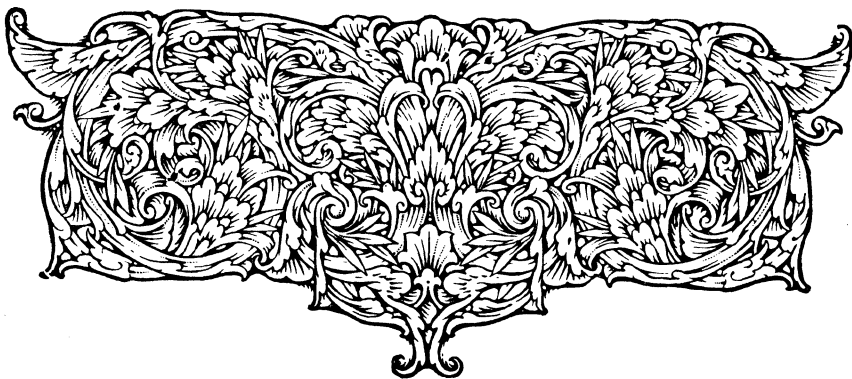
But when she felt the nest shake as the viper coiled about the cord, and realised that the peril to her chicks was so near, her courage returned, and she flew out prepared to die for them. She whirled madly around the snake, ready to dare anything for her babies, little brave heart that she was, and sought for an opening to assail the terrible foe. Carinata paid no attention to her. But with a shrill cry Baya arrived and joined in the attack. At sight of him, as he fluttered wildly about her, the viper forgot all caution. Loosening her coils on branch and cord, she struck furiously at him—struck with such a savage force that she tore herself from her relaxed hold, missed him and fell into the boiling water below. It swept her helplessly along, rolling her over and over, buffeting her, stifling her. Ordinarily she could swim, but now the swollen stream gave her no chance. She



was carried away powerlessly, hurled against tree-trunks and dragged away as she sought to cling to them, bruised against rocks and banks and finally flung ashore exhausted, breathless. And as she lay half dead a slim, grey-coated little animal with red eyes,

pointed nose and a furry tail, stole out of the undergrowth and pounced on her. One nip of the mongoose's sharp teeth severed her spine, and Carinata's life was ended.

But Baya and his family lived happy ever afterwards.



## DAPHNE.

**D**APHNE'S never half so sweet—  
She of girls the rarest—  
As when she's the flirt complete  
With her nearest, dearest.

Daphne in her nurse's arms,  
Daphne, three sweet summers,  
Spread her net and used her charms,  
Captured all new-comers.

Daphne's father's well content,  
Though she smiles or teases,  
Every pretty trick's well spent,  
Men and girls she pleases.

Daphne's three tall brothers swear  
There's no girl comes nigh her;  
See, she'll draw them by a hair  
If this fancy fly her.

Woe betide the forward swain  
When he comes a-wooing!  
Daphne, laughing at his pain,  
Works his worse undoing.

Daphne, with an honest trick,  
Men allures to flout 'em;  
Other girls cry, "Kiss me, quick!"  
She's content without 'em.

Daphne deals delights, rewards  
To her world of lovers,  
Casts them down or crowns them lords  
As her mood discovers.

When at last our Daphne's ta'en,  
Still she'll go a-flirting,  
With her happy man for swain,  
Easing him and hurting.

Oh, when Daphne's sons are tall  
Like young trees about her,  
She'll be Queen of Hearts to all—  
Sure, I'd never doubt her.

Daphne, in the cypress groves,  
Still will gather roses,  
And her grandsons be her loves  
Till the story closes.

KATHARINE TYNAN.



# TOUCHING UP THE PORTRAIT

By OWEN OLIVER

ILLUSTRATED BY ALBERT BAILEY

SIR CHARLES REDLAKE, R.A., was not in his studio when Mr. Bilby was shown in for his last sitting but one. Mr. Bilby passed the waiting minutes inspecting the portrait of himself which was to adorn the library of the Merchants' Institute.

The picture was practically finished. The last two visits were only for critical comparison of the original and copy and a little touching up, the artist said. Mr. Bilby, not being an artist, could not see what was left to do. He felt almost as if he surveyed himself in the looking-glass—surveyed a well-preserved, strong-featured, competent man. The portrait was a speaking likeness, and it made him out quite as well-looking as he thought himself; and yet he shook his head.

"Caught in a rather severe expression," he muttered to himself; "unduly severe. Or else he exaggerated the severity to emphasise the dignity. Umph! Confound those artist fellows! They've no idea of the value of time. I've a lot of business before me this morning—deuced unpleasant business. I shall be glad to get it over. I think he's dwelt on the severity a little too much. I look almost forbidding. I dare say I do look like it just now, after Emily nagging me over Maud's affair. What's the use of a man struggling up the ladder to carry his family with him if his girl's going to begin at the foot with a penniless young fool? Or if he's going to waste his gains in bolstering up a feeble firm? That's what they'll want me to do at the meeting. Ought to know me better! Before I go there I suppose I'll have to bring out my heavy artillery to convince Meadows that I've made up my mind about that scoundrel Smith. I'll concede that we won't prosecute him. It does a firm no good to take its *employés* into

court. But he must go. I shall insist upon that. Where the deuce is Redlake? Three minutes he's kept me waiting. Full three minutes! Those artist fellows can't understand that minutes are money to business men. I'll— Oh, here he comes!"

He turned to greet the famous painter.

"Good morning, Redlake," he said. "Fine piece of work this—fine piece of work! But there's something about it that I don't quite like. Don't quite like, you know."

"Don't you, now?" Sir Charles said cheerfully. "Sitters often don't. They're not used to seeing themselves as others see them. The portraits of ourselves that we carry about with us are only the age of the heart, thank God! Only that. I never see myself as sixty, except in the glass. Feel like a young blood of about forty, especially on such a jolly morning."

"It doesn't make me out older than I am," Mr. Bilby said. "Glad to see that I wear so well—in other people's eyes. I've no complaint against the portrait on the score of age or of looks. But, you know, Redlake, you've made me out devilish severe—hard."

"Oh, hard!" Sir Charles glanced from the original to the portrait and back again. "I don't paint character, you know; only lines and creases. What's there's there. What it means is inference."

"Umph! Anyone can draw an inference from this." Mr. Bilby waved his hand at the canvas. "You caught me with a stern expression."

"I caught the expression you brought with you," Sir Charles asserted. "It has remained the same expression throughout the sittings. You know, Bilby, we don't look as different as we feel at different times. Character's an average of our varying moods. The predominant mood determines



the figure. In just the same way, a face is a sort of composite photograph of our expressions. The more usual ones mark deeper. If a frown is frequent enough to make a line, or an habitual smile has made a crease—there it is! I warned you at the start that I didn't idealise—painted people as they were. And there you are."

"A hard man," said Bilby.

Sir Charles shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, aren't you?"

Mr. Bilby shrugged his shoulders and set his lips.



"Mr. Bilby passed the waiting minutes inspecting the portrait of himself which was to adorn the library of the Merchants' Institute."

"When there's occasion for hardness," he owned. "Unfortunately, I've several occasions to-day. I dare say the portrait represents me fairly enough at the moment. Still, I don't want to go down to posterity at my hardest. Couldn't you touch up the expression a bit?"

"And go down to posterity as a corrupt artist?" Sir Charles commented. "No. There's only one way in which a hard-looking man can go down to posterity through me as soft-looking, Bilby, and that's by touching up himself."

"Touching up the expression, you mean?" Mr. Bilby suggested.

"I doubt," the painter remarked, "if you can do it except by touching up the man. The lines on the face won't lie, Bilby, won't lie."

"Then," his sitter said, "I must be a pretty severe chap! That's my chair, I suppose? We may as well get on."

He took the sitter's chair, and the painter took up his brushes and palette, kept glancing from the sitter to the portrait and back, put in little touches here and there.

"I suppose," Mr. Bilby observed presently, "a business life is hard, does harden one, makes hard lines and creases, eh?"

"I should think it tends that way," Sir Charles agreed. "Contact with

the world generally hardens, whether it's con-

tact in business or in anything else. Normal effect of exposure to light, touch, experience—anything. The softer touches come from home life. Now, if you'd been painted sitting among your family—Do you mind looking toward the bust of Augustus? You've turned round a bit. If you'd been painted among your children, no doubt you would have had a softer expression. That is to say, as soft as you can run to."

Sir Charles smiled faintly, rather thoughtfully. The discussion was not quite unexpected by him.



"Umph!" Mr. Bilby grunted. "I've only one child. She's a girl; nearly twenty-one."

"Only her! Then no doubt she twists you round her little finger."

"Not in things which I don't consider to be for her best happiness," Mr. Bilby stated firmly.

"How can you tell what is for anyone else's best happiness?" Sir Charles queried. "Keep looking at the bust, please. The idea that you can regulate other people's lives is the idea of a hard man, Bilby; possibly responsible for a stern line or two."

"You've mistaken your vocation, Redlake," the sitter snapped. "You ought to have been a preacher!"

"We all ought to be. We all see the need of one for other people, if we study them closely; to paint them, or to doctor them, or even to do business with them. Human documents! You must read a good many in a big firm like yours."

"Yes. I've one before me now. Assistant cashier. Young man of five-and-twenty. I thought he promised well, but I've got to insist on sacking him this morning."

"Insist? Who is there to obstruct you?"

"I've a partner, you know. He's a good enough fellow; competent, and sensible enough in most things, but too easy with the staff. He wants to keep the young waster on; give him another chance. Another chance of robbing us! The unprincipled young rotter!"

"Ah! What's he done?"

"Fingers in the till; got betting and so on."

"No hope of his reform?"

"Not with us," said Mr. Bilby grimly. "He may do all right elsewhere, after the lesson. His dismissal will be a warning to the rest, anyhow."

"Umph! Look a little to the right of the bust now, please. The expression of the moment is fairly hard, Bilby. Anyone dependent on him?"

"That's nothing to do with me," Mr. Bilby asserted; "but I believe he's married and has a baby."

"Poor devil! It's something to do with him and them! Don't make me fancy I've to harden the expression by looking like that. Put the wretched young man out of your mind—and face. Try thinking of the next document to-day."

"That," Mr. Bilby stated, "is an unpleasant one, too. A little firm going down. I'm attending a meeting about it.

Some of the usual fools have made the usual proposal to bolster them up; to give them more credit, and let them lose more of our money. It's always ungracious and distressing to refuse a suggestion like that, but, in the interests of our firm, I've got to."

"No chance of their pulling round, eh?" Sir Charles asked.

"Oh, I don't say that! The people who are backing them aren't utter fools; wouldn't propose it if there weren't a *chance*. But it means taking a distinct risk of loss. Take enough risks, and *some* losses are bound to eventuate. I couldn't insure our share of the risk they propose to take for five hundred pounds. They might just as well ask us to give something over that amount in cash. Look at it like that—actuarially—and the proposal is blown out of the water. That's my line this morning."

"Another hard line, you know! Quite appropriate to the portrait!"

"Oh, hang you! I suppose *you* don't chuck five hundreds about? Nearly done?"

"Nearly done. I'm glad that my business is only to paint people, not to judge them."

"It seems to me that you *do*, confound you!" Mr. Bilby growled.

"I only record the verdict as delivered by their faces. Don't confuse Recording Angel with Judge! That will do for this morning. It's a good portrait, Bilby, though I am passing judgment on myself."

Mr. Bilby rose; walked closer to the picture; stared at it.

"If it is," he grunted, "it passes judgment on me. Yes, it's a great piece of painting; seems to stand out from the canvas. But it's too hard in the expression, Redlake; unfairly hard. I wish you'd touch it up a bit."

"Perhaps," Sir Charles suggested, "there are some who wish that *you* would."

He spoke rather brusquely. Mrs. Bilby had been to see the portrait the afternoon before. She had said, "It's exactly like Henry," and wiped her eyes! The painter had drawn inferences from *her* expression, and from things that his wife had said to him. Lady Redlake was a chattering little person who knew all about everybody. She was fifty-two and her husband still called her "sweetheart." Perhaps she—and he!—can be inferred from that.

"It is you," he said, "who make your expression, not I."

"Umph!" said Mr. Bilby.

He picked up his hat and walked out, forgetting to answer the artist's "Good



morning." He paused on the landing to look at himself in the mirror.

"Perhaps," he concluded, "I do look rather hard. Perhaps I am! There's no sense in overdoing a trait. It's an unimportant affair, Smith's; an easy chance for a little touching up, perhaps. I'll see what Meadows says about it."

Meadows began: "I suppose it's no use appealing to you, Bilby, but I can't help thinking about the poor wretch's wife and child. What are you smiling about? You have a wife and child."

"That," said Mr. Bilby, "is what I was thinking. There's no harm in smiling, Meadows. They say if you cultivate an

"Bilby," Meadows cried warmly, "I misjudged you! I shall take pains to let everyone know that I did not have to extort the concession; that it was your conclusion as much as mine. I am very



"I've no complaint against the portrait on the score of age or of looks. But, you know, Redlake, you've made me out devilish severe—hard."

amiable expression you become amiable; but I suppose it is the other way about—the other way about. If you believe that Smith would take the opportunity to turn over a new leaf—? Myself, I am rather inclined to give him the chance."

glad that you take the merciful view. We all need it sometimes, Bilby; all need it! Shall we have Smith in?"

"You tell him," Mr. Bilby proposed. "I must go off to that meeting." He glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece and saw



himself in the glass beside it. He really thought that the portrait did injustice to his present expression, and he felt pleased by his partner's appreciation. It occurred to him that the man in the overmantel did not look as if he would be specially hard upon a small and struggling firm. Why not use them as another opportunity for touching up himself?

"It's rather awkward about Crane and Leaper's, Meadows," he observed. "Of course there's no particular reason why we should run any further risk over them. Still, I think they've quite an appreciable chance of pulling through if they're helped; I mean actively helped by giving them more credit. Passive help—merely not pressing for what they already owe—won't be sufficient. They're hard-working young people, and they've been quite straightforward about their position. I was wondering whether, if they agreed to a certain amount of supervision by nominees of the firms who backed them, we might keep them on sounder lines that way? It's knowledge more than anything which the young men lack. What do you think?"

Meadows thought the idea excellent; *but*, he told the old cashier, he did *not* know what to think of "the boss."

"Something must have happened to put him in a good humour this morning," he conjectured. "I've never known him so benevolent."

"He looked it when he came in," the cashier said. "I saw him smile at himself in the glass. He'd been to a sitting for that portrait of his, sir, and I expect he found he was coming out well. He's a good-looking man, of course, if his face wasn't generally so set; *very* good-looking if you catch him with a smile. Perhaps the painter waited for one!"

"The portrait has certainly been a long time in hand," Mr. Meadows chuckled. He liked his jest, and his staff, and even his grim partner.

Mr. Bilby's face wore almost a smiling expression when he entered the committee room to discuss the affairs of Messrs. Crane and Leaper. He walked up to the two downcast young merchants and shook hands with them.

"We may be able to help you to straighten things out," he reassured them. "You've been gaining experience, you know; gaining experience. You might do better in future. The times aren't quite so bad."

The friends of Crane and Leaper, who had

regarded Mr. Bilby as their most dangerous opponent, gasped at this evidence of friendliness. After a whispered consultation they proposed him for chairman of the meeting "as representing the biggest house concerned." He explained his proposal of further credit on condition of the formation of a supervisory committee. The committee was not suggested from suspicion, he stated, but because he believed that the firm needed a little experienced advice. Given this, he didn't see why two such hard-working and intelligent young fellows shouldn't work up a good business in time, and square up with everyone.

His proposal was received with acclamation. Crane jumped up and made him a spluttering speech of thanks. Old Pratt, with whom he had long been on somewhat strained terms, rose and said: "We have to thank our chairman for a very satisfactory arrangement. I'm a blunt man, and I'm going to say bluntly that he and I haven't been very good friends hitherto, but that after this I regard him with friendliness as well as respect."

Several others complimented Mr. Bilby upon his "generous wisdom," as one put it. He liked the phrase, and felt pleased to the point of benevolence.

"You thought I was as hard as I looked, eh, Pratt?" he said, as they walked out together. "But I'm not. I'm not."

He wished that Sir Charles had been present at the meeting, for he felt more and more convinced that the portrait did him an injustice.

"It's only how I look when I'm put out," he assured himself. "In future, when I'm put out, I shall make a point of not showing it! I might have another portrait painted some day!"

He rather forgot this resolution when he reached home, and his wife said that she *must* speak to him further "about Maud's affair"; looked distinctly put out.

"I told you my decision this morning," he said sternly.

"Oh, Henry," Mrs. Bilby implored, "don't glare at me like that! You look exactly like your portrait!"

Mr. Bilby seemed to swell. He wanted to swear at the portrait. But there were a few points in which his submissive wife was the master. One was that he dared not swear before her. Put it rather that he knew that to do so would outrage her feelings so utterly that he would not do it. Something of Mr. and Mrs. Bilby can be



inferred from that. Anyhow, he did not like hurting her, and never did so deliberately. So he swelled with unused breath.

"Now," she almost whimpered, "you look worse! If Sir Charles painted you *now*!"

And suddenly, to her intense astonishment—and his own—Mr. Bilby laughed aloud. She clutched his arm anxiously.

"Harry," she cried, "is anything wrong with you? Did you tell me the truth about what Dr. Polson said when you went to him?"

"No," he told her, "I didn't! He said I'd been eating too much! Now look here, Emily. You think I'm hard, but I'm only sensible. Anyhow, I'm not so hard as I look—in that portrait. He caught me with an unusual severe expression. I've told him so this morning. I don't consider that it's fair to hand me down to posterity looking as if I were just going to put on the black cap."

"You don't look like it now," Mrs. Bilby said. "Of course *I* know you don't mean to be like—like you look sometimes. If I hadn't known it, I should have found it out this morning. I'm sure you *mean* to be kind, Harry. I met Mr. Meadows, and he told me how nice you had been over that poor boy Smith, and that young Crane and Leaper. I was so proud about it! And it helped me to speak to you again about Maud; but I must have done it anyhow. I thought, 'If he's kind to other people, he'll surely be kind to his own daughter.' She's our only child, Harry."

"That's why we have to be careful over her future, Emily," he stated.

"I know, Harry, I know. What is a woman's future? It isn't money, Harry. No, no! It's—it's—I can't express things properly like you can—Mr. Meadows said that everyone was talking about your speech at the meeting this morning. 'So kind and competent,' he said. They were his words, Harry."

"Umph! It's the 'competent' you don't like. I'm not being unkind over Maud's unfortunate affair, only competent."

"But she is so fond of Charlie Messenger, and he is really a nice boy, dear. He'll get on all right—like those young fellows you helped this morning—with such a clever and competent man as you to advise him. We can't make Maud's life happy without what she wants to make it happy, Harry. Let them be engaged on probation, and see

how he gets on. Don't look like that. It's how you look in the portrait."

"Umph!" said Mr. Bilby. "Umph! It seems as if the confounded thing is always going to be used against me. Do you know, Emily, between ourselves, I don't consider that portrait does me justice. It makes me look *unduly* hard." He inspected himself in the mirror. "He's painted me rather as the stern parent," he protested, "and that's what *you* keep trying to do! Of course I only aim at Maud's good. From an outside point of view—a competent point of view—that isn't young Messenger. I've nothing against his character or his industry, and I grant that he's a pleasant, friendly lad; but I'm afraid he hasn't brains enough to go very far. For example, I don't think he'll ever be equal to taking my place in the business. Having no son, I always hoped that my son-in-law would look after it when I am gone."

Mrs. Bilby came and stood beside him in front of the glass; took his arm quietly.

"Isn't it more important," she said, "who looks after our daughter when we are gone, Harry? I think he'll be very nice to her. He's the one she wants to look after her. It makes such a lot of difference to a woman, marrying the right man. There's only one right man for a woman, dear. If he's that, she can put up with his little ways, especially when she knows that he always means to do his best for her. Maud loves him, Harry——"

"Ah!" said Mr. Bilby. "Of course, her preference is a point to weigh in. Women are like that. And she's set on him, eh? Well, what do you think about it, Emily? Shall we put them on probation before they're engaged? Or if they're going to get married in the end, we shall manage them better—the young fools will need it!—by taking a friendly line with them right from the start, eh?"

"Harry!" Mrs. Bilby cried. "Now you look quite different! I wish you had looked like that when Sir Charles painted you."

"So do I," said Mr. Bilby. "So do I! Well, he caught me with a set look. He may have exaggerated it to give me dignity, you know. That's what I rather fancy. Anyhow, it's how I shall go down to posterity!" He sighed. "Let's have Maud in. I'm going to tell her that since I give in to her fad—I won't use the word—I'm not going to do it ungraciously; that I expect the young man to do his best, and show himself fit to take the business as well as my



daughter. And that, anyhow, if he does his best and is a good husband to her, I shan't round on him. And that, if she is as good a wife as her mother, she'll get over him like her mother gets over me, eh? I see through your little tricks. Ha, ha, ha! Time passes, Emily. Time passes. We're marrying our little girl. Yes, Redlake has made my expression too hard. But it can't be altered now."

When Mr. Bilby went for his final sitting, Sir Charles was waiting for him in the studio. He came forward and held out his hand. (He had never done that before.)

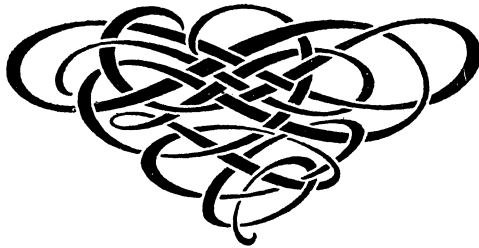
"On reflection, Bilby," he said, "I've concluded that you were justified in complaining that I caught you with an unfairly hard expression. My wife has been ragging me about it. A wise man learns a deal from his wife. Even an old fool does! Even an old fool! People have been telling her of some very nice things that you've done lately. I must say they—they earn my

respect, Bilby. I—but I was talking about what the missus said. She suggests that I ought to paint you as your wife and girl see you. As two fair-minded men, we wouldn't pervert the truth so much as that, eh? Not so much as that! As you look to me this morning might be about a fair average. Sit down and stare straight at the bust of Augustus. Don't look *too* benevolent. There's a limit to what you can do to a portrait by touching up. No limit, thank Heaven, to what we can do to ourselves!"

"I am afraid," Mr. Bilby said, when the portrait was finally approved and passed (he had to give an extra sitting), "they'll say I look too amiable."

But they don't. The general verdict is: "A good portrait; but I always think of him as smiling more than that, as if he were just going to do something for someone."

May they say that of me when I am gone.



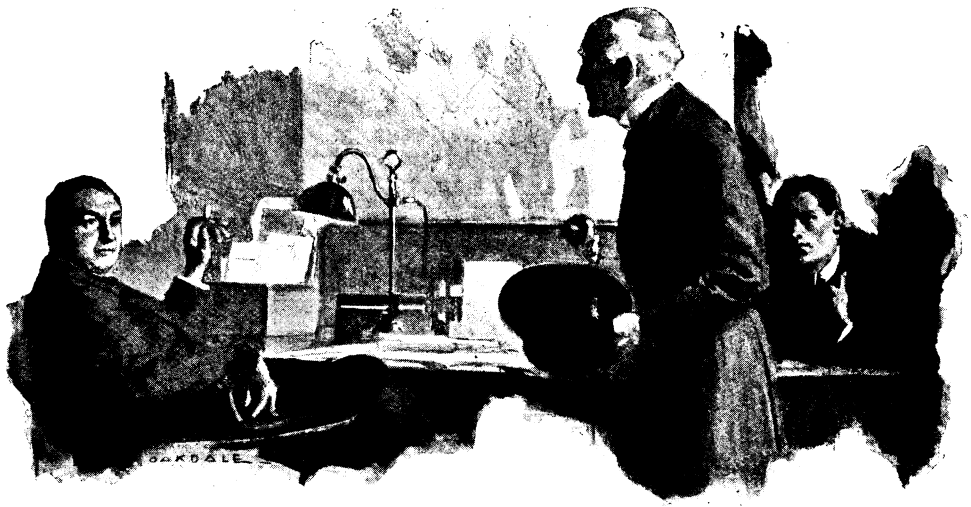
## A SURREY ROAD-CHANTY.

**I**F you would find a sweet peace, a deep peace, a long peace,

If you would find an old peace, a peace as old as Time,  
Then walk you out from Box Hill to Ranmore, to Westcott,  
Up the hill to Wootton Hatch climb, and climb, and climb;  
Still it lies before you, the long peace, the old peace,  
So haste across the Tillingbourne, and let your steps be fleet;  
Then up into the fair woods, the tall woods, the wise woods,  
Then up through the beechwoods that go to Friday Street;  
And here among the tall trunks, the grey trunks, the grand trunks,  
Here within the greenwood the peace begins to fall;  
It clings about the hill-sides, that sweet peace, that deep peace,  
It's there from dawn to dew-time, from night to morning-call;  
It's close-hived in Friday Street, that long peace, that old peace—  
Ah, come with me, beloved, and let our steps be fleet!  
Swift with me through beech trees, through pine trees, through larch trees,  
Till we touch together that peace in Friday Street!

LETITIA WITHALL.





“‘My resignation was due to ill-health,’ said the agent. ‘You know that, Mr. Ambrose.’”

# SOMETHING BETTER

By ALAN THOMPSON

ILLUSTRATED BY E. G. OAKDALE

FOR more than a hundred years the firm of Hutcombe and Co., Exporters, has occupied the modest premises familiar to those who frequent the busy streets between Cheapside and Bishopsgate. Without making a sensation, Hutcombe's has long enjoyed a reputation in the City for integrity as well as for the ample prosperity that comes from sound business methods.

Young Blount counted himself a lucky man when he took his seat in the inner office as a member of the firm. His good fortune was due to the fact that, as a clerk before the War, he had won the good opinion of his uncle, the late Edgar Hutcombe.

When Blount returned to civilian life, after four years' fighting in France and Palestine, he learned that Edgar Hutcombe had, on his death-bed, appointed him junior partner. He learned, too, that the firm had suffered severely. Practically all their dealings were with the Far East, principally India and China, and while hostilities lasted, these had declined to a minimum. Only the energy, shrewdness, and determination of Ambrose Hutcombe had saved the firm from the disaster that had overwhelmed so many similar houses.

Ambrose Hutcombe had been close on forty when he succeeded his father. A confirmed bachelor, he had no interests outside the business, and he had spared neither his *employés* nor himself in the struggle to avert ruin.

Business was slowly recovering when young Blount—after twelve months as a partner in the concern—learned that even the rose of peace may be accompanied by very disturbing thorns. The year had been, from his point of view, highly successful. Intelligent, keen as mustard, handsome and attractive, he had worked strenuously and had won golden opinions all round. His popularity with the staff, notable even before the War, had increased. What was, perhaps, even more important, his cousin and fellow-partner, who was by no means easy to please, had expressed satisfaction with his achievements.

Hutcombe's offices were not large, and the cousins, as partners, shared the best room in the establishment. In spite of occasional differences, they had worked together amicably, and were to all appearances on excellent terms, when Ambrose Hutcombe made the announcement that Maurice



Scudamore was resigning the post of chief agent in India, which he had held for many years.

This was unpleasant news to Blount—indeed, the personality of Scudamore had played so prominent a part in the recent history of Hutcombe's that it came as a shock. "Whew! But that's bad!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, it's a pity," agreed Hutcombe. "His doctor won't let him go abroad again—says India would be fatal. Scudamore wrote me last week. You were so busy on that Bagdad order—which, by the way, you handled quite neatly—that I wouldn't worry you about it."

Blount nodded. He wished, and not for the first time, that his cousin would be less solicitous when settling matters affecting the *personnel* of the firm.

"We shall certainly miss Scudamore in India," he said. "But of course he will remain with us in an advisory capacity; his long experience and unique gift of reading the tortuous minds of these native chaps are invaluable."

"Oh, Scudamore understands the Oriental mentality all right," said Hutcombe. "But he won't stay in any capacity. It's all settled—he leaves us at the end of the month." He spoke with an absence of concern that Blount perceived with amazement.

"It's a big loss, Ambrose, a thundering big loss!" he declared vigorously.

"H'm! A loss undoubtedly," agreed the senior partner. He rose from before his desk and straddled in front of the fire, nursing his coat-tails. "Yet not the loss it would have been ten—even five—years ago," he went on. "Scudamore's returns have fallen off immensely the last year or two. Man's no longer fit for the job. None of us last for ever, Wilfred, and Scudamore has had a good innings. As for keeping him as adviser, I don't agree with that. The old chap is close on seventy, and crotchety and prejudiced, as men of his age always are."

"I've always found him particularly free from prejudice," rejoined Blount, with some resentment. He had a genuine liking for Scudamore. "I think it would be a great mistake to lose a man we can't replace."

"Ah," murmured Ambrose, and there was a slight smile on his fleshy, curiously colourless face, "you *would* think so. But then, my dear Wilfred, you haven't had much experience. No one is indispen-

able, not even Maurice Scudamore. In fact, I have already found the man who will take his place—Clooer of the Trans-Orient."

"Clooer?" gasped Blount. "*Clooer!*" He leaned back in his chair, the picture of incredulity. "You aren't serious, Ambrose?"

"Quite," said Hutcombe coldly. "Why not?"

"Why, because the fellow's a rotter!" retorted the young man hotly. "Because he's a bragging gas-bag, and no approach to being a gentleman!"

Hutcombe raised the sparse eyebrows which were a shade lighter than his red-brown hair. "The 'fellow' is the smartest traveller in the trade," he said. "His turnover last year was treble Scudamore's."

"Oh, Clooer is smart enough—I don't deny *that*," was Blount's scornful reply. "But look at his methods! He's not the right *class*, Ambrose. Clooer and Hutcombe's are—absolute contradictions. Tradition alone is dead against it."

The senior partner gave his queer, infrequent laugh—a laugh that was almost soundless. He seemed to swell with this secretive merriment until his great body—a tall, fleshy man, he scaled a good fifteen stone—looked gigantic.

"Tradition be hanged!" he said easily. "We can't afford luxuries in these days, my friend. Did 'tradition' save this business during the War? No. I saved it. Did tradition save Poole and Cathcart or Hemingway's, or half a dozen other houses rich in tradition? They've crashed—tradition and all!"

"In spite of it, not because of it," retorted Blount obstinately.

"Rubbish!" said his cousin. "Tradition was played out years ago. It's as useless now as any other form of sentiment. I tell you, Wilfred, that business is business nowadays. You've done well this year, but you would have done better if you'd gone about things less delicately. Father made the same mistake—prating about 'the honour of the firm,' 'an Englishman's word is his bond,' 'play cricket always, even in business,' and so on and so on. And he lost us more big contracts than I like to think of. No, you don't want gloves in business to-day. As for 'being a gentleman,' you can cut that caper after office hours, if you like. Here we are out for plunder."

"Pirates all?" queried Blount, smiling. But the smile concealed considerable



uneasiness. If Ambrose really meant to appoint Clooer, this persiflage—for persiflage it must be—held an ugly ring in it.

"Pirates, if you like," answered Hutcombe. "One thing's certain—if you don't best the other fellow, he'll best you. You must get your blow in first, as old Foch or someone said, and it must be a hard one."

"Yes," agreed Blount, "but not a foul one. And I don't believe, Ambrose, that you——"

He was interrupted by the entrance of a clerk with the intimation that Mr. Scudamore would be glad if Mr. Ambrose—the Hutcombes had always been distinguished by their Christian names, and Ambrose, although he disliked it, was no exception—could spare him a few minutes.

"Mr. Ambrose" hesitated, frowning and pinching his lower lip. "I thought Mr. Scudamore was supposed to be out of Town," he said sharply. "I can't see him this morning. Impossible. I'm much too busy. Tell him so, Ferrers. And tell him—— Tch!"

He broke off with an exclamation of annoyance as an elderly man appeared in the doorway. "Come along, then, Mr. Scudamore!" added Hutcombe ungraciously. "Don't stare at me, Ferrers! Clear out and shut the door!"

As Blount got up to give the newcomer a chair, he decided that his cousin was more disturbed by Scudamore's resignation than he had admitted. He hoped the senior partner—never remarkable for consideration—would avoid incivility to their oldest representative, who was a gentleman in every sense of the word.

"Thank you, Mr. Blount," said the agent. "I prefer to stand."

Thin and delicate, the agent, with his clean-shaven, sun-darkened face and white hair, was not unlike the Hindus and Rajputs among whom he had spent the greater part of his life. He was a little old-fashioned in manner, and his close-fitting, grey frock-coat was also in the mode of a former generation.

"I have no wish, Mr. Ambrose, to encroach on your valuable time," he went on with dignity, "but I am anxious to have the matter of my pension settled as soon as possible. When I——"

"Yes, yes," interposed Hutcombe, raising a plump, white hand, "I know, Mr. Scudamore, I know." He had returned to his desk-chair, and was sitting with crossed

knees, his head lowered, his keen eyes half closed. "But I fancy that was settled—definitely."

"You mean—your letter last week—was final?" said Scudamore. He seemed to speak with difficulty. "You mean I am to have nothing—not a penny—although, as you are well aware, your father promised that I should have an adequate pension?"

"I am afraid so, in the circumstances," replied Hutcombe gently. He tapped his strong teeth with a pencil-case. "You see, Mr. Scudamore, the fact that you are resigning voluntarily influences the question largely—very largely. If we had asked you to resign, the case would wear a different aspect."

"My resignation is due to ill-health," said the agent. "You know that, Mr. Ambrose. Besides, I'm getting old—nearly seventy. I have given the best years of my life—forty years, sir—to the service of the firm."

"Yes," assented the head of the firm, "and you have drawn an excellent salary for forty years. It is a creditable record on both sides, Mr. Scudamore, and I think we may exchange compliments. Personally, I consider you have been mistaken in twice renewing an agreement that made no mention of any pension, but no doubt you knew your own business best. What my father may or may not have promised you is of no interest to me. Hutcombe's is free from liability, and I cannot, in the circumstances, do anything more for you."

The old traveller drew himself erect, and Blount noticed that the hands with which he gripped the back of a chair were trembling.

"The liability is there, without any documents," he protested. "And you are Hutcombe's—you and Mr. Blount here. I cannot believe that you mean to turn me off without a penny."

"No, no!" said Blount eagerly. He had been burning to intervene. "We shall——"

"Excuse me, Mr. Blount," interrupted Ambrose peremptorily, "I am dealing with this matter. There is no question, Mr. Scudamore, of turning you off," he added. "And as far as money is concerned, you need not pretend that you haven't saved a nice little nest-egg!" He laughed unpleasantly. "I happen to remember that you are a widower with no encumbrances. I have a good memory."

"No doubt," agreed the agent, and his



voice shook with restrained passion. "So I need not remind you that during the War I worked for half salary, and——"

"At your own suggestion," put in Hutcombe quickly.

"Admitted," said Scudamore. "For the firm's benefit, though, Mr. Ambrose. And you promised that the balance should be made up after the War."

"No," denied Hutcombe. He was no longer smiling. "I promised nothing. I said that if profits permitted, I *hoped* to do so. Profits haven't permitted, though if you were remaining with us, it is possible that they would in a year or two."

"I see," said Scudamore. He drew a deep breath. "Then you definitely refuse me a pension?"

Hutcombe shrugged his heavy shoulders. "I'm afraid so," he replied. "We can't give money away, you know. This is a house of business, not a philanthropic institution."

"You—you need not insult me, Mr. Ambrose," said the traveller, with increasing agitation. "It is easy to make fun of an old man, but you will live to regret this—this sharp practice. If Mr. Edgar—your father—had been alive, he would never have permitted such injustice."

"If my father had lived to conduct this business, we should all have been hunting for jobs, let alone pensions, long ago!" declared Hutcombe.

The agent fumbled at his collar with trembling fingers. "Injustice!" he repeated. "Monstrous injustice! Such treatment of an old servant is scandalous—iniquitous! I protest against it."

"I should not trouble to do that," said Hutcombe, smiling. "No, you've done very well out of Hutcombe's, and you must be satisfied. Considering that you've always rejected my suggestions with lofty disdain, and have gone your own superior and obstinate way, you can't be surprised if I 'shed no tear at parting.'"

"Then," began Scudamore, "then"—he moistened his lips, his dark face had a greyish pallor—"I am to leave Hutcombe's—after forty years—with nothing—in spite of your father's promise of a pension?"

"Oh, you have my good wishes, Scudamore, you have my good wishes," said Hutcombe blandly. "Don't forget *that*! And don't——"

But Blount could endure no more. The indignation that had been seething within

him broke down all restraint. "Good Heavens, but this is too much!" he cried, springing to his feet. "I'll be no party to this! It's infamous, and I won't have it at any price! I——"

"Sit down!" roared the senior partner. He had for a moment been dumb with amazement. "What the devil are you talking about? Have you lost your senses? Shut up and sit down! This is my affair, remember, not yours."

Blount, his eyes flashing and his face on fire, confronted his cousin like a lion. "Then I mean to make it mine!" he retorted angrily. With a quick movement he turned to Scudamore. "I'm no party to what my cousin has said, Mr. Scudamore," he declared. "I dissociate myself from it entirely—every word of it—and I promise to see that you have your pension and the money that is due to you."

"*Faugh!*" scoffed his cousin. "Wilfred, you're mad!"

The old traveller, who had been peering with his faded blue eyes from one partner to the other, nodded. "Yes," he agreed, "if Mr. Blount thinks I want the money now, after what's happened, he's certainly mad." He drew his slight figure erect with great dignity. "I wouldn't touch a rupee from either of you to save my life!" he added. "Keep your money! I don't want it." He shook his grey head and his lips curved in a strange smile. "I've something better—something better. Something you'll never have—either of you. *Something—but that's my secret—mine!*"

Still smiling in that queer, mirthless fashion, he turned and walked from the room.

Hutcombe, tilting back his chair, yawned. "Well, that's that!" he said carelessly, but his eyes beneath lowered lids were keenly watchful. "Old fool! In his second childhood, eh, Wilfred?"

Blount, who was busy at his desk, made no response, and the senior partner went on affably: "These old fellows are the devil of a nuisance. I had the same trouble with Larchett and Bretherton, father's original book-keepers. Scudamore's as artful as a waggon-load of monkeys. 'Something better!' Of course he has something better—a lakh or two of rupees from one of the rajahs with whom he was so pally, a choice collection of diamonds and emeralds, or something of the sort. Old hypocrite! But it was a mistake on your part to interfere, Wilfred. You don't



understand these Anglo-Indian twisters as I do."

"I understand enough to know that Mr. Scudamore is a gentleman and that he has been treated disgracefully," was Blount's indignant retort. "But we shall have to make amends. I must insist on that, Ambrose."

"Must you?" queried Hutcombe. "And on what exactly must you—insist?"

His cousin disregarded the sneer. "Scudamore must have the amount due to him for arrears of salary, and the firm must give him a decent pension," he said doggedly.

"Oh, you insist on that, do you?" asked the senior partner. "Well, you can go on insisting, but it won't make much difference. Who are you to insist? Is *your* name Hutcombe?"

"No," replied Blount, "but——"

"But you think that, because my misguided parent was fool enough to give you a share in the business, you are going to run the show!" put in Hutcombe loudly. He let down the front legs of his chair with a crash. "And you're wrong!" he added, thrusting out his lower jaw. "I—Ambrose Hutcombe—am head of Hutcombe's, and while I'm alive nobody else is going to be. I'll sack Scudamore and engage Clooer or anyone else I like. Just bear that in mind, will you, Cousin Wilfred?"

"Are you going to give Scudamore a square deal?" persisted Blount. "That's what I want to know."

"Rot!" said his cousin rudely. "You want to play the noble patron to Scudamore at my expense. You want a little more of the cheap popularity you're always sucking after. You're on the wrong tack, my friend, and if——"

"I want an answer to my question," interposed Blount. He was pale and calm now, but none the less furious for that. "If you refuse to act decently in this matter, then I've done with Hutcombe's."

Ambrose Hutcombe compressed his thick lips. "Is that an ultimatum?" he asked slowly. "It is. Then Hutcombe's will have to dispense with your valuable services, for I'm hanged if I'll take orders from you, Mr. Blount, or any other sentimental ass!"

"Well, that's frank, anyway," said Blount equably. "I can see now that this had to come sooner or later. Better now than later on. You think I'm an ass, and I think you're a cad as well as a knave, so it's scarcely likely we should pull together. We'll settle the legal details later on, when I'm

less likely to forget the conventions and give you a thrashing."

"You insolent puppy!" snarled Hutcombe. He was across the room in an instant, his swollen face close to his cousin's. "You—you dare to insult me? I've a good mind to thrash you for that!"

"All right," said Blount. He signed and blotted the cheque he had drawn. "Carry on."

But the senior partner flinched before the other's steady grey eyes. For all his size and weight, he considered discretion the better part, and, mumbling something about not wanting "a scene in the office," he retreated in some discomfiture to his chair.

Blount, with a contemptuous laugh, picked up the cheque and strolled from the room. His recent misgivings that the present *régime* at Hutcombe's was not straight were justified, and his cousin, having dropped the mask, had shown an uncommonly ugly nature. Yes, the sooner he was out of Hutcombe's the better.

Half-way down the corridor Blount was stopped by a very scared-looking clerk, who told him that Mr. Scudamore had been taken ill suddenly in the travellers' room.

"Fainted for a bit, sir, and when he came to, seemed all over the place. Doesn't know where he is. Lost his memory, I should say."

Blount hurried to the room named, and one glance at the old agent's ashen face and staring eyes filled him with grave apprehension.

"Ferrers," he rapped out, "a doctor! Quick as you can!"

The doctor, who talked somewhat vaguely of incipient paralysis, cerebral lesion, and arterial congestion, was not reassuring.

"The sooner the old gentleman is in bed, the better," he pronounced. "Rest and quiet are essential. His condition is dangerous. I should advise Sir Heddle Vernon immediately."

"Very well," said Blount. "Perhaps you will arrange with Sir Heddle, doctor, if—— Ainsworth"—he turned to the senior of the group of interested clerks—"what is Mr. Scudamore's address? Ninety-six Cromwell Gardens, Notting Hill Gate. Will you make a note of that, doctor? I will take this poor fellow home at once, and shall remain with him until I have seen Sir Heddle. Ferrers, a taxi, and look sharp about it."

Scudamore recovered a little in the fresh



air, and was able to sit beside Blount in the cab. But his mind wandered, and he talked in a disconnected way of incidents in India. Suddenly he caught Blount by the arm.

"The Begum's jewels, Khusru!" he whispered excitedly. "Don't forget the Begum's jewels! . . . The wealth of the East! Beyond the dreams of avarice! . . . Those diamonds, eh? And the emeralds—the emeralds! The gold, too. . . . Or was it brass? Or—was it—brass?"

His voice trailed into silence and his chin dropped on his breast. For a few minutes he was silent, then he began to talk again—in Hindustanee at first and almost inaudibly; afterwards he spoke in English, but without much coherence, of investments, of stocks and shares, of rates of exchange and dwindling dividends. Money had evidently been much in his thoughts, yet he made no mention of Hutcombe's, of his arrears of salary or the subject of his pension.

This struck Blount as strange, and he wondered, while he looked at the agent's thin face and listened to his babble of treasures, of gold and scrip, whether there was, after all, some foundation for Ambrose's claim that Scudamore had acquired some share of "the wealth of the East." Such a theory might explain his refusal of the money due to him and his declaration that he had "something better." It was problematical, of course, but feasible.

Number Ninety-six was an old-fashioned basement house in a long and dreary terrace. Blount had to mount nearly a dozen steps to reach the door, which was opened by a young lady between twenty-five and thirty. She was tall and slender, with a pale face and a great quantity of dark hair. Even in the twilight Blount was impressed by her beauty.

"I wish to speak to Mr. Scudamore's housekeeper," he explained.

The girl started. "Mr. Scudamore's housekeeper?" she echoed wonderingly. "I am his grand-daughter, and perhaps I could——" She broke off, and her expression changed. "There's something the matter with him!" she said, with instinctive alarm. "He is ill or——"

As gently as possible Blount told her what had taken place.

"Poor grandfather!" she exclaimed, her wonderful grey eyes shining with unshed tears. "I must go to him at once."

She took a step forward, but Blount stopped her with a gesture. "Excuse me, but I think it would be better if I help

him in," he said. "If you show me his room, I will get him to bed. You might come to him then, when he is resting and you are less agitated."

"I see," murmured the girl. "Yes, you are right. It is very good of you, Mr.—are you Mr. Hutcombe?"

Blount fancied she was relieved when she learned his identity. At all events, she seemed anxious to do all he asked.

It proved easy enough to get the agent to bed. He was as tractable as a child, and gave no signs of interest in his surroundings until his grandchild came into the room. Then his face was transfigured by a radiant smile, and he raised himself a little on his pillows.

"Agnes," he cried, stretching out his arms, "you are very late, darling!"

The girl ran to the bed and, kneeling beside it, slipped her arm about his thin shoulders. With her cheek against his, she murmured words of love and pity. Except to repeat "Agnes" now and then, the old man did not speak. He seemed content to hold her hand and listen to her endearments. At length he drifted into sleep, and the girl rose, with Blount's help, from her strained position.

"You must be awfully cramped, Miss Scudamore," said the young man. "But he knew you. That's a good sign, anyway."

The girl shook her head sadly. "No," she rejoined. "She—'Agnes'—was his wife, my grandmother. Poor grandfather! He did not know me. He—he——"

But her hard-won composure deserted her. Tears fell fast, and she hid her face in her hands. Blount, whose own eyes were none too clear, turned away. The girl, however, quickly regained self-control.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Blount," she said. "It is not often I am foolish. But my grandfather is very dear to me. We are everything to each other. There is, you see, no one else."

"Do you mean that you have no other relative?" asked Blount.

"Yes," answered the girl.

She went on to tell him how, as an orphaned child of seven, she had passed into widowed Maurice Scudamore's care; how they had lived together for twenty years, scarcely apart for a day; how she had shared his travels; how he had devoted himself to her, taken part in her childish games and sympathised with her childish sorrows; how he had educated her and lavished on her all the love of a generous



nature, a love which, as Helen Scudamore revealed in every word, had been richly returned.

It was indeed no common bond that united grandfather and grandchild, and

breathing for accompaniment, moved him deeply.

"Naturally you are anxious about him, but we shall pull him round," he said cheerfully. "Sir Heddle Vernon is a first-rate



"'Agnes,' he cried, stretching out his arms, 'you are very late, darling!'"

Blount realised that their love for each other was very beautiful—too beautiful, indeed, for the conventional remarks of a stranger. So Blount made no comment, although the narrative, told in the girl's soft voice, with the old man's stertorous

man. Has your grandfather been like this before?"

The girl shook her head. "He has never been strong, and I have nursed him through several bad illnesses," she answered, "but he has never been like this. He has always



known me. Lately he has seemed queer and restless, but I put that down to worry."

"Worry?" echoed Blount quickly. "May I ask what about?"

Miss Scudamore hesitated, colouring vividly and averting her eyes.

"Perhaps it was about money—about his pension?" suggested the young man, guessing the cause of her confusion. "It was? Yes, I'm afraid there has been a little misunderstanding about that, but it was all straightened out to-day. You will find a cheque for two thousand pounds in his pocket-book, which I am going to take and pay into his account first thing in the morning. He need worry no more about money. He shall certainly have his pension—in full. And Hutcombe's, of course, will pay the expenses of this illness."

"It is very good of you and Mr. Hutcombe," murmured the girl, looking down at her restless white hands. "I—I—it is a relief. I need not hide the truth from you, Mr. Blount, that grandfather has always been rather—rather strange about money—rather extravagant. He—in fact, we owe quite a lot of money—nineteen pounds. He would never save a penny. He has always talked as if he would one day be immensely wealthy, and has often told me that his Indian friends were certain at some time or other to lavish splendid presents on him."

"And won't they?" asked Blount. "But perhaps they have already done so."

"No," said Miss Scudamore, and she spoke with decision, "they never have and never will. Grandfather has no wealthy friends, only pretentious people who have misled him for what they could get from him. It has been hard to protect him at times from himself," she added, with a sad smile. "He is so credulous, so easily deceived."

Blount heard her with a swelling heart. He could imagine what this girl must have endured. Little Nell and her grandfather—*mutatis mutandis*—over again! Poor old Scudamore! For all his ability as an agent, he had been duped by other rogues as well as by Ambrose Hutcombe, and this beautiful comradeship between age and youth had not been free from the shadow of tragedy.

"Well, for the future he is going to be protected," said Blount. "I shall see to that, and— Ah, a ring! No doubt Sir Heddle."

Sir Heddle Vernon's examination was briefer than Blount had expected, and his

face was grave as he entered the shabby little sitting-room where the young people awaited him.

"Do I understand, Mr. Blount, that you are not related to the patient?" he asked.

Blount's heart sank. The reason for the question was only too obvious. "No relative, Sir Heddle, only a friend," he replied.

"Mr. Scudamore is my grandfather," said the girl in a low voice. "I am his only relative. I—I am prepared for—anything you wish to tell me."

Sir Heddle, glancing from the white-faced girl to Blount, hesitated.

"Miss Scudamore is very brave," said Blount. He felt it would be mistaken kindness to mislead her.

"Ah," murmured Sir Heddle, "yes." His shrewd eyes were compassionate as he put a gentle hand on the girl's shoulder. "I am glad of that, because I must ask her to be braver than she has ever been."

Helen Scudamore bowed her head. "You mean—" she whispered. Her lips quivered, but she maintained her self-control. "Will it—be—soon?"

The great man made no direct answer. "I am sorry, very sorry," he said. Genuinely moved, he led the girl to the door and opened it for her. "You would like to be with him, I am sure, while you can." Closing the door after her, he turned to Blount. "Poor girl!" he added. "She is, as you said, very brave. The old gentleman cannot live many hours. Would you like me to send a nurse, Mr. Blount?"

"Thank you, yes," replied Blount. "I shall stay here, in case of need, till the end."

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Scudamore rose from the paper-strewn table in the shabby sitting-room. "You mean that is the last?" she said, looking at the paper in Blount's hand. "I am very glad, for your sake. I can never—never thank you properly, Mr. Blount, for all you have done for me both before and since the funeral."

Her voice quivered, and she turned with an instinctive movement to hide her emotion. Blount sat still, his fine, capable hands clasped on the table, looking compassionately at his companion. Grief had brought shadows beneath her eyes as well as sombre garments for her slender form, yet it could not dim her gentle loveliness nor lessen the courage which was so integral a part of her noble nature.

It was true that Blount had served her



well. Her grandfather's affairs had been much involved, and his debts far heavier than the girl had imagined. Blount had brought order from chaos, but he found no trace of gold, let alone the jewelled treasures of the Indies, and now the last document was signed, the process of "winding up" Maurice Scudamore's estate at an end.

"You mustn't talk about thanks," said Blount. "I'm only too glad to have been useful, for your grandfather's sake, Miss Scudamore, as well as your own. Anything I have done was certainly his due. You seem to forget how much Hutcombe's still owes to the man who served them so long and so faithfully. Hutcombe's has——"

"Oh, please don't speak to me of Hutcombe's!" interrupted the girl, with unusual anger. "I know how much I have to thank Hutcombe's!" A vivid colour had invaded her pale cheeks, and she faced Blount with sparkling eyes. "Mr. Ainsworth was here yesterday with some things grandfather left at the office, and he told me what is common knowledge there—how Ambrose Hutcombe refused a pension to grandfather; how *you*, Mr. Blount, condemned him for that; how, as a protest against such injustice, you sacrificed your position; how you gave grandfather two thousand pounds of your own money. And now"—she let her hands fall with a helpless gesture—"you say I am not to thank you—you who have been so kind and so generous!"

"Well, after all, I don't know," said Blount slowly. He stood up, rather pale and nervous, and went to the girl's side. "I *should* like you to thank me, if you will do it very nicely."

There was a sudden silence. Helen's pendent hands were trembling. "I—I don't understand," she whispered.

"Don't you?" said Blount. He took her hands and held them close to his throbbing heart as he sought and found her eyes. "Don't you, Helen?"

Helen understood then. With his arms about her she thanked him "very nicely."

\* \* \* \* \*

Five years after Maurice Scudamore's

death, Blount, hurrying along Lombard Street, almost collided with a tall, stout man about to enter a luxurious car. He stopped short, to find himself face to face with his cousin and former partner.

Five years had added many pounds to Ambrose Hutcombe's weight, many thousands to his bank balance, and a handle to his name. He had become "Sir Ambrose," and was generally recognised as one of the keenest men in the export trade. Rumour declared that "Go-ahead Hutcombe" was well on the road traversed by putative millionaires.

"Ah, Wilfred," he said carelessly, "how are you? All right? That's good. So you're 'Co.' with Mainwaring now. Doin' very fair?"

"Quite fair in our modest way," answered Blount, who had managed to overlook the two fat, condescending fingers offered to him. "You look flourishing, Ambrose."

"Mustn't complain, sir, mustn't complain," said Hutcombe complacently. "You threw away a mighty big thing when you left me. If—but I must get on. Appointment with Lord Poulshaven. G'bye! Oh, by the way, how about old Scudamore? Pegged out, didn't he? I suppose you never found those emeralds and so on he was always gassing about?"

Blount shook his head. "No emeralds, Ambrose," he replied. "But I found 'something better.' Perhaps you remember he mentioned it the day I left."

Hutcombe, his hand on the door of the car, started. "'Something better'?" he echoed incredulously. "Better than *emeralds*! What d'you mean, Wilfred?"

Blount, smiling, looked straight into the other man's eyes. "I mean his granddaughter," he explained, "my wife. Something better than jewels or even money, Ambrose—a woman's love. Good-bye."

"If ever there was a downright, hopeless fool——" snorted Sir Ambrose, and he banged the door of the car after him.

The "fool," chuckling at the encounter, hurried on home to Helen's welcoming arms.





# OVERHEAD PLAY AND THE SMASH IN LAWN TENNIS

By KATHLEEN MCKANE

LADY CHAMPION

*Illustrated from new photographs by Cecil B. Waterlow, for which Miss McKane has posed specially for this article.*

IN every game there is variety—the intensity rises and falls—and in lawn tennis there are moments when ordinary care, concentration, and common-sense—the principles that I have already tried to describe in previous articles—are insufficient to meet the demands upon one's play. Such moments occur when volleys and smashes have to be executed at or near the net; and they are moments of supreme exhilaration, taking one out of oneself, setting free such latent powers as one may possess, and making one act as though impelled by universal vital forces.

Beginners and hard-tryers who yet lack confidence may not be greatly encouraged by these remarks, but I must be honest. To say that good volleyers are born, not made, would be too sweeping. It appears to me to be necessary that they should be both born and made. By the first qualification I mean that they must have it in them to volley and to smash; and psychologists now tell us that we have all sorts of wonderful powers within us, the existence of which we should be far too modest to suspect. Therefore let the learners take heart. The faith that repeats without question or reasoning, "I can," is very much to be desired in the career of any lawn tennis player, and it must not be faith according to the schoolboy's definition, which consists in believing things you know to be untrue. You never know what you can do at lawn tennis. Therefore it is perverse and foolish to say, "I cannot."

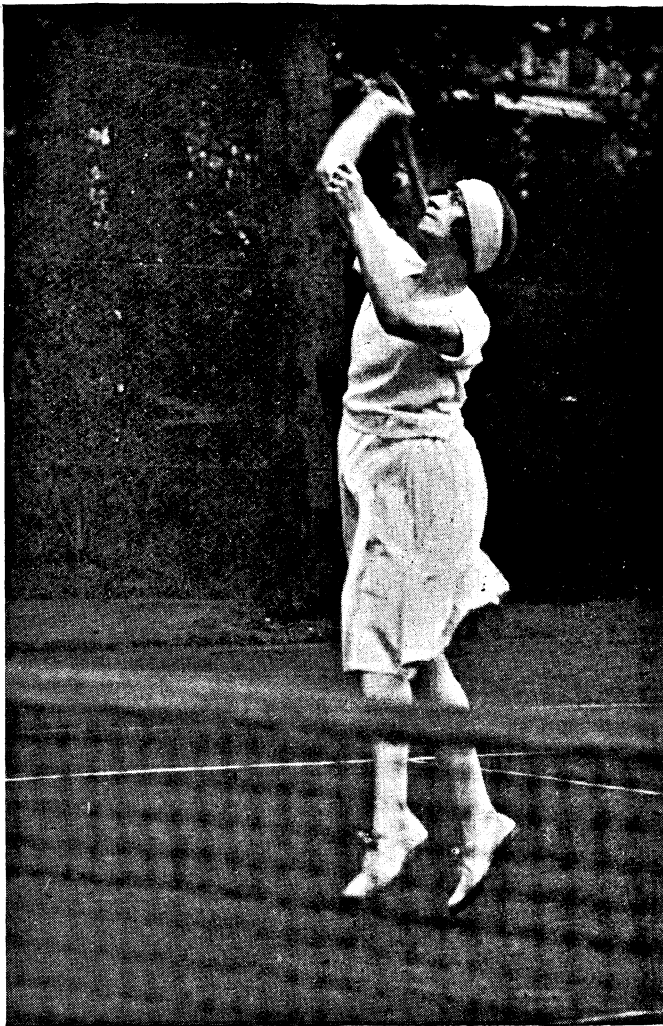
This is just by way of introducing the most difficult and exacting part of the game—the art of overhead play in general and

smashing in particular. It is the department of the game in which the finest thrills and joys occur, perhaps just because calculated care is often insufficient and one is thrown back upon one's latent powers. But these latent powers can be helped to manifest themselves, and that is really the utmost any teacher can hope to achieve in guiding others. You do not know what powers you have got or what you can achieve in an emergency, but give your powers every chance, the benefit of every doubt, though, by the way, you ought not to have doubts while you are playing.

Of all the men who play lawn tennis to-day, there are comparatively few who never attempt net play; but with the ladies, unfortunately, the case is very different. Those who do not acquire an all-round game, who are content to stay always at the back of the court, not only can never reach the top of the tree, but also must miss much of the pleasure and exhilaration of the game. Therefore let all beginners of my own sex take warning, for it is almost impossible to change one's methods and learn a really effective all-court game once youth is past, as numerous examples testify.

I will try to describe the principles which seem to me to be most effective and helpful in making overhead strokes. The position and action which are most natural, easy, and successful for making a high overhead stroke from any part of the court are just the position and action which one uses for overhead service—yet another reason why all girls should learn to serve overhead. A fast service is really a smash from the back of the court, but one for the making of





KILLING A HIGH BALL NEAR THE NET.

in getting the racket into position overhead.

We will consider overhead strokes first of all, before passing to the general subject of volleying, since they follow naturally from a discussion of the service. All that I have said in previous articles about watching and concentrating upon the ball needs to be repeated with additional emphasis; for it is more difficult to follow the flight of a ball that is high above one than one that is more or less on a level with the eye. The stars do not shine by day, and consequently our gaze is usually either level or directed slightly downwards. This fact does not appear at first sight to have anything to do with the matter, but actually it furnishes another example of the difficulty of doing unfamiliar things—of concentrating one's eyesight and attention in an unfamiliar direction.

There is also the brightness of the sky to be reckoned with. Even in this country the sky is always brighter than the ground: it is all a matter of comparison, and some people are more sensitive

than others to changes of light. For my own part I do not find that an eyeshade is any help or advantage, except when there is a very strong general glare, such as prevails often on the Riviera.

The difficulty of following the flight of an overhead ball makes it harder to achieve accuracy in timing a smash than any other stroke. The most common tendency is to hit too late, so that the ball goes down into the net. If one is fully aware of this weakness, it can often be corrected by deliberately aiming a little way behind the back line; but this idea only applies to balls that are dropping from high in the air. A ball that comes at one fairly fast, a foot or so above one's head, is more liable to be hit out than

which the player is allowed to take his own time. Volleys and smashes almost always have to be made in a hurry, and you can not hurry successfully over anything that you are quite unused to doing. Therefore, if you have already acquired an overhead service, you have gained half the battle, for you will not be flustered and taken aback by having suddenly to perform unfamiliar actions. Watch any woman player who serves underhand and seldom volleys when she is drawn up to the net by a short ball. If she gets a return that has to be taken overhead, the chances are that the ball will pass her before she can even succeed in raising her racket shoulder high. Practice and habit give one quickness



into the net, because its impact is sufficient to force the racket back to an angle from which it will be returned too high. Such a stroke—the hitting of a fairly fast ball overhead—requires greater firmness of wrist and a stronger grip than any other. Overhead strokes in general put more work upon the wrist than any other shots. One can best appreciate this by watching anyone who is really good at it—M. Borotra or Miss Ryan, for example.

There is ample photographic evidence in the papers that many players smash with both feet sometimes quite a long way off the ground; but to the beginner who does not know how to place the feet in making an overhead stroke, who feels them awkward, I would say: "Make the stroke off your left foot, as in overhead service. If you have to jump to reach the ball, the left foot will be the last to leave the ground." These remarks, of course, apply only to right-handed players.

The further you swing your racket back, the more pace you are likely to get on the ball. But there are times when pace is not everything. Usually in a double, with two people opposite who should be capable of covering the court, pace is all-important—the smash should be a clean kill. In a single, on the other hand, direction is more important—the ball should be placed, not necessarily very hard, out of the opponent's reach.

As in other departments of the game, most first-class players have their own special peculiarities in making their overhead strokes. M. Borotra, who, on his day, is second to no one in the world in smashing, appears always somehow or other to get over the ball and come down on top of it, like an earthquake or a thunderbolt, with a crash rather than with a full-arm swing. Probably a slow-motion

cinema film would show much about his smash that escapes the eye—that his racket goes further back than one thinks. Mrs. Wightman, the famous American who, with Miss Helen Wills, won the ladies doubles championship at Wimbledon this year, is another example of a most effective, though somewhat unorthodox, volleyer. She makes her overhead strokes with a movement that is almost the reverse of the swing usually employed, and it is not so much her swing as her wrist action that imparts pace and direction to the ball. She does not appear to swing back very far, and comes through quite straight, with an outward flick of the wrist just as she strikes. The result is a



AN OVERHEAD STROKE IN WHICH ACCURATE PLACING RATHER THAN PACE IS THE PRIMARY OBJECT.



stroke of great power and accuracy, made without much apparent effort. The moral for beginners of Mrs. Wightman's overhead work at the net is that if you happen to have any special aptitude, any natural facility for making a particular kind of overhead stroke, then develop it to the utmost, never mind whether it is considered orthodox or not. If it is considered unorthodox, it will probably puzzle your opponents all the more to return your strokes: the point is to make the strokes with accuracy and certainty.

Mr. Lycett is a player whose overhead work everyone should study. He can be both severe and accurate from any part of the court, and he makes his strokes with movements that are easy to follow and look easy to emulate. He swings well back, and the resulting stroke is more of an overhead drive than a Borotra-like crash. Apart from what has already been said about watching and concentrating on the ball, strength and firmness of grip and wrist are the principal factors in making such strokes as these. A man with an exceptionally strong wrist can do deadly execution by placed volleying at the net with what appears to be little more than a flick of the racket. Mr. F. M. B. Fisher's net play furnishes a good example to watch in this connection.

But few ladies can rely on strength of wrist alone. To get the necessary severity in making an overhead stroke at or near the net, they have to give the racket a good swing back, and there are more ways than one of doing this. I have cited the ordinary overhead service action, because that is generally the easiest way, but Mlle. Lenglen has, in her great repertoire of strokes, a wonderful round-arm smash at the net which she uses with great effect in the doubles game, though seldom in singles. She makes the stroke off her left foot with exactly the same action as for the ordinary forehand drive, only that her arm swings above her head instead of shoulder high. It is an extremely useful stroke and not really difficult to learn, but very few ladies acquire it.

Miss Ryan is consistently brilliant in her overhead work, extraordinarily quick, and at least as severe as any other lady. Although

not tall, she is extremely difficult to lob over. A disadvantage in the matter of height can always be compensated, and often more than compensated, by extra agility. People who know little of lawn tennis, but see that overhead strokes are more likely to be outright winners than ordinary drives off the ground, generally jump to the conclusion that it must be a great advantage to be tall. But in actual practice the cat-like agility of a small player is often far more valuable than a few extra inches. Height generally means weight, and that in turn spells comparative slowness of movement, and there is no department of the game in which a little extra speed is more valuable than it is in smashing. Mr. W. M. Johnstone, MM. Cochet, Lacoste and Albarran, Mr. Mavrogordato, and many other small people, might be cited as examples in this connection.

To watch well-known players and study their methods is very valuable for all who wish to acquire or improve their overhead work; and, did space permit, I might spend a lot of time in citing and describing the powers of the stars of the lawn tennis world. In every case, however, the onlooker should notice that good footwork plays a part even more important than in the execution of ground strokes, and that the rules, in so far as any rules can be laid down, are the same. For a right-handed player a forehand volley should be made with the weight coming forward from the right foot on to the left, and with the left shoulder towards the net, whilst the reverse is the rule for the backhand volley.

It is often said that some players simply cannot smash, the idea being that something is definitely lacking that makes the performance of such strokes impossible to them. But I doubt if this is ever really the case. A good smash differs from other strokes in that it brings into play practically every muscle in the body; it is an effort of one's whole being. Therefore a body that is supple and obedient to the will is necessary, as well as a strong arm and a good eye, and within it there must beat a heart that is strong and fearless. These qualities are within the reach of all. The good smasher must be an all-round athlete with a true sense of sport.





## A SONG OF HOPE

I KNOW this splendid hope of youth,  
The shining spear whereon I lean,  
Is God-bestowed to fight for truth—  
I know because mine eyes have seen.



I know this silver trumpet-call,  
The note wherewith my soul is stirred,  
One day shall raze Apollyon's wall—  
I know because mine ears have heard.



I know this strong, unfalt'ring joy,  
The torch that gleams in ways obscure,  
One day all shadow shall destroy—  
I know because my heart is sure.



Oh, flaming torch before mine eyes!  
Oh, clarion-call that smites mine ears!  
I couch my spear to meet the lies,  
And follow, fighting, down the years.

ANNE PAGE.





"A perspiring young man was expending much energy and ingenuity in the effort to free his line."

# WHY NOT?

By IANTHE JERROLD

ILLUSTRATED BY J. H. THORPE

**M**R. DOYLE ran his fingers distractedly through a mop of grey hair which previous onslaughts had already caused to stand up like the crest of a cockatoo. He fixed his daughter with a humorously resentful eye.

"It's a bit hard," he complained, "if an elderly man like me, when he wants a little peace and quiet in London as a change from the—er—wild activities of Little Hempsted, can't safely and with a light heart hand over the reins for a day or two to his daughter. A bright, intelligent girl of twenty-two, and she can't be trusted not to involve her poor absent father in all sorts of absurd transactions! Sold the fishing, forsooth! Next time I go away I'll expect to come back and find you've sold the house over my head. I must say I think it's a bit hard."

"The Right Honourable Member," recited Judy, cutting herself a wedge of cake, "spoke for twenty minutes and a half. His peroration moved the House to tears."

"More tea, please. I suppose you didn't take advantage of my absence to sell the shooting over our ancestral moor—I mean the one by the duck-pond."

"Nothing there to shoot," mumbled Judy, her mouth inelegantly full of cake, "except Mrs. Cattermole's chickens."

"And there's nothing in the river to fish for," replied her father, "except sticklebacks. But that doesn't, apparently, deter you from letting the fishing for ten pounds."

"How sharper than the serpent's tooth," reflected Judy, looking pensively into the unnecessary log fire she had lit to celebrate Mr. Doyle's return, "it is to have a thankless parent."



She met his exasperated eyes with the patient, gentle gaze of a martyr.

"I," she pointed out gently, "might consider that I had cause for complaint. I have acquired for you during your absence a perfectly good cheque for ten pounds, and a perfectly good neighbour for the summer. But are you grateful? No, you reproach me."

She sighed and, slipping to her feet, shook the crumbs from her lap into the fireplace.

"You've often wished you had someone to play chess with in the evenings," she remarked.

"Did he tell you he played chess?"

"No. Our conversation was confined strictly to business. But he wears tortoiseshell glasses, stoops, and stammers slightly. From these premises I argue a studious disposition and an intellect equal to mastering the game of chess."

"He doesn't play chess," said Mr. Doyle with gloomy decision. "Fishermen don't. They're no good for anything but fishing." He groaned as the full absurdity of the situation engulfed him once again. "Fishing! Oh, Heavens, Judy, fishing! I don't suppose for a moment he'll come near us to play chess or anything else—unless it's to have the law on us, that is."

"He can't do that. We've not done anything."

"I certainly haven't."

"Nor have I. There were no false pretences or anything of that kind about the affair. I didn't advertise our bit of river as the angler's Paradise, or anything like that. I didn't give him to understand that it was packed so full of trout they had to lie head to tail, like sardines in a tin. I didn't tell him that a salmon had been caught there last week weighing seventeen and a half pounds without his clothes. I might have said all that, but I didn't. I was strictly truthful."

Mr. Doyle sighed gently. "I should like very much to hear what you did say."

"Certainly." Judy squared her shoulders, clasped her hands behind her back, and, with the grave yet gentle air of one seeking to enlighten the ignorant and obtuse, began:

"I met Mr. Massiter——"

"Massiter?"

"Yes. Basil of that ilk."

"Basil? How d'you know his name's Basil?" demanded her father, with a parent's natural curiosity.

"Saw it on his cheque. I met him in the

water-meadow, surrounded by cows. He saved Bill from a horny death."

The intelligent but plebeian animal on the hearth-rug at Judy's feet thumped two inches of tail on the floor as in confirmation of her story.

"Bill," said Judy severely, "is a coward. Bill likes running after cows and seeing them swish their tails. But when they get together and play ring-a-roses round him he takes cover behind harmless strangers. The stranger on this occasion happened to be our fisherman."

"I wish you wouldn't call him *our* fisherman," interrupted her father irritably.

"Why not? He's going to fish in our river. Of course I thanked him becomingly for saving Bill's worthless life. I also agreed with him that the weather was warm. He then asked if the fishing in the river was for sale. I said yes."

"You said yes?"

"Why not? We never fish there ourselves. I said that for the sum of ten pounds we would gladly waive all piscatorial rights."

"Your nerve is amazing, my dear Judy," said her father with unwilling admiration.

"With his cheque-book flapping in the breeze, he drew forth a fountain pen——"

"Do you mean to say the fellow wrote a cheque there and then, standing in the water-meadow, surrounded by cows?"

"Why not? He wanted the fishing, I wanted the cheque. Why linger?"

"Why, indeed? I conclude, then, that he didn't waste time in asking such a merely formal question as, for instance, whether there were any fish in the river?"

"He did ask me if I'd ever fished there. I said that I had done so, some time ago."

"Judy!"

"It was quite true, father. I used a bent pin, and fell in. . . . We then walked up the bank, and across the bridge, and down the other side. So he isn't buying a pig in a poke."

"Nor a fish in a river," said Mr. Doyle grimly. "Didn't he make any remark about it?"

"No-o," replied Judy, in the slow, abstracted voice of one whose aim is the entire truth. "Oh, yes, he did. He said there were a lovely lot of king-cups."

Mr. Doyle sighed deeply. "Well, Judy," he said resignedly, "it's plain to me you've given the run of the place to an escaped lunatic from Bedlam. It's all very well to laugh, but I don't like it at all. At the



best, it's swindling a poor simpleton out of ten pounds."

Judy regarded her father thoughtfully. "He didn't *look* so awfully simple," she murmured. "And, anyhow," she added brightly, "if it's on your conscience, why not buy a fish and put it in the river, where he could see it sometimes?"

\* \* \* \* \*

"We are going," remarked Mr. Doyle in a portentous tone, eyeing the amazing display of berries on a hawthorn by the river's bank, "to have a hard winter."

For perhaps the first time since she had been able to talk, Judy did not dispute this yearly prophecy of her father's. For at that moment, from the other side of the hawthorn tree, an agreeable voice remarked, more in sorrow than in anger: "Oh, dash, confound, and blow!"

"Obviously," muttered Mr. Doyle, "that's the angler. His moderation surprises me. Still, he's got plenty of time to improve on it. Heaven knows what he'll be saying at the end of his six months."

Emerging upon the river bank, they found their four-footed friend Bill sitting on guard over a thermos flask, a large writing pad, and something which, to Mr. Doyle's conscience-stricken eyes, looked remarkably like a landing-net. A perspiring young man was expending much energy and ingenuity in the effort to free his line from the close connection it had formed with the topmost branches of the hawthorn tree. He turned a grimly-set and heated face over his shoulder as Mr. Doyle's shadow fell across him.

"Good morning," he said politely, if a little breathlessly. His eyes brightened with ingenuous pleasure as they lit upon Judy.

"Hullo!" he said, laying his rod upon the grass, as if prepared to devote himself to entertaining visitors. "It's the landlord."

"I'm the landlord," said Mr. Doyle. "But I'm quite willing to shift all responsibility on to Judy. So any complaints may be addressed to her."

"Have you caught anything yet?" demanded Judy. Her father marvelled at the clear candour of her gaze as she asked the question.

"I've caught that tree," replied the young man ruefully. "But I can't land it—not without an axe."

Mr. Doyle gazed into the network of small spiky twigs among which the line was caught in an apparently inextricable tangle.

"You see," murmured the young man, "what makes it so dashed awkward is that there's a hook on the end."

"Yes," agreed Mr. Doyle. "Yes, I suppose there would be. Let Judy have a go at it. She's great at crochet. If I may say so, you seem to have chosen an unfortunate spot for making a cast. This is the only tree on the bank for quite a distance."

"Just so," agreed the angler, smiling. He had a pleasant smile and agreeable blue eyes, to which his large, round horn-rimmed spectacles failed to give an air of owlish wisdom. "I thought the shade would be grateful and comforting. I pictured myself sitting under the boughs in the state of Nirvana one associates with fishing, watching the rats and the moorhens and—Hullo! I say, you are a genius!"

This last remark was addressed to Judy, who now approached, nonchalantly carrying a rod and line completely and miraculously detached from the tree.

"How did you do that?" asked the angler with admiration. "I thought that fly was gone for ever to make birds' nests."

"It is," replied Judy cheerfully. "I cut the line. Why not? You've got lots of other flies. I should try that bright red affair with bristles."

"I rather think that's for salmon," murmured the angler, eyeing the fly in question doubtfully. "We're after trout. I beg your pardon, sir?"

This last was addressed to Mr. Doyle, who had turned aside with an inarticulate sound.

"I told my landlady I should probably be bringing back my own supper," continued Mr. Massiter cheerfully. "She said she'd cook the joint, all the same, as she had the fire going."

"Very wise of her," murmured Mr. Doyle, taking one of the young man's proffered cigarettes with rather the shame-faced air of a scrupulous hawk accepting hospitality from a pigeon.

"This," remarked the angler conversationally, "is the most attractive bit of river I've seen for a long time."

"You surprise me," said Mr. Doyle, clearing his throat uneasily.

"Delightfully quiet and undisturbed," murmured the young man. "A perfect happy hunting-ground—"

"Eh? Hunting?" Mr. Doyle turned a startled eye upon his tenant. "A few years ago they used to run a pack of otter hounds



here, if that's what you mean—until unfortunately they killed the otter, which rather put an end to the sport."

"A happy hunting-ground for the naturalist was what I was going to say,"

ring-ouzel! No. I believe one was shot here ten years or so ago."

"Shot!" muttered the young man fiercely. "Isn't the hooligan with the gun extinct yet?"



"Together they leant upon the rail."

said Basil. "Do you get the ring-ouzel about here at all, by the way?"

"The what?"

"The ring-ouzel. Gilbert White mentions it as appearing occasionally in these parts."

"I never heard of anybody being troubled with it. They had a foot-and-mouth-disease scare the year before last. Oh, you mean the

"Why, please," asked Judy in the deprecating tone of one who asks what she fears is a foolish question, "should the hooligan with the gun be extinguished sooner than the gentleman with the—er——" She delicately indicated the fishing rod with her eyebrow.

"I only meant," explained the angler



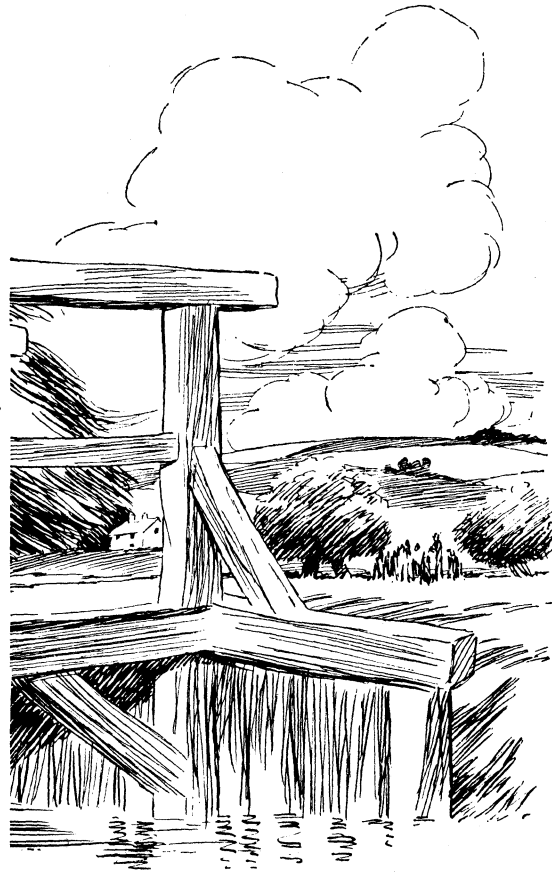
eagerly, "that the ring-ouzel is a very rare bird in these parts."

"The trout," sighed Judy, "is a very rare fish in these parts. And therefore, if you want a three-course dinner, you'd better get to work."

"I suppose I had," said Mr. Massiter, doubtfully eyeing his complicated and expensive-looking tackle. "When I've had some luck, I'll drop in one evening, if I may, and bring you some of the spoils."

"You'd better not wait for that," said Mr. Doyle as they parted.

"Well," sighed Mr. Doyle, when a field



and a hedge had put them out of earshot, "one lives and learns. I never met a fisherman before who'd pay ten pounds to stand on a bank and talk about birds. Of course, he's mad. Nice young fellow, too, apart from that."

\* \* \* \* \*

"He is mad," said Mr. Doyle at breakfast a couple of weeks later.

"Who?" Judy, crunching toast, looked up briefly from *The Daily Wire* magazine page and returned to it again.

"Young Massiter."

"Oh, him! Or, rather, oh, he! Well, of course he is. Why not?"

"I wish you wouldn't keep saying 'Why not?' in that absurd way," said her father irritably.

"Why not? Oh, I'm sorry!" Judy giggled, unabashed by the rather wavering severity of her father's gaze. "For a change, then: why?"

"Because it's a question to which there's either no answer at all, or so many answers that the brain staggers with them and fails to produce one. . . . As I was saying, he is mad. Hard lines on his father."

"You speak with feeling. Why on his father?"

"Well, my dear Judy, I, as a father, have a natural fellow-feeling for other sufferers. The young man's father, it appears, is Sir Charles Massiter, the throat specialist."

"I know," said Judy. "Pity he isn't a brain specialist, in the circumstances, isn't it? When did you discover the secret of our fisherman's birth?"

"During one of our little chats," said Mr. Doyle. "He was at my old House at Oxford, by the way."

"Which? Charles or Basil?"

"Oriel. . . . What did you say? Oh, both."

"You seem to have wormed the story of his life out of him very cunningly. I suppose I ought to have asked for references before taking him on as a tenant. It didn't occur to my sunny, unsuspecting nature."

"Naturally," said her father, "one likes to know a little about the stranger within one's meadow."

"Did you remember to ask him why he left his last place?"

"Seriously, Judy—"

Judy put aside *The Daily Wire*, folded her hands, and looked at her parent with an intensified reflection of his own solemn, portentous gaze.

"The most absurd stories are going round the village," said Mr. Doyle. "I had a long talk with old Cattermole when he came up with the milk this morning. His idea is that he's a detective."

"Who? Cattermole?" Judy gave a



laugh of pure joy. "I knew he'd had delusions once or twice through what Mrs. Cattermole calls tremendous deliriums, but I didn't know his mind was un-  
hinged."

"No, no, no! Not Cattermole. Young Massiter. Cattermole thinks young Massiter is a detective. If Cattermole says so, you may be sure the whole village will be buzzing with it in an hour or so."

"What Cattermole thinks to-day Little Hempsted thinks to-morrow."

"Precisely. And though no one has a more wholesome contempt for public opinion than I myself—still, I don't wish to be regarded as a possible murderer by my worthy neighbours, if it can be avoided."

"My dear father, surely it hasn't gone as far as that!"

"I don't know," said Mr. Doyle, moodily gazing at his toast. "I thought Cattermole looked at me very strangely this morning when he told me young Massiter was dragging the river."

"Dragging the——"

"Yes. Or, at least, wading about in it in a pair of rubber boots."

Judy wrinkled her forehead as if in the effort to find excuse for behaviour that seemed, on the face of it, strange.

"People do wade out after fish, don't they?"

"In the Scottish lochs they do, I believe. But it's common knowledge Massiter hasn't caught so much as a half-pound dace since he's been here."

"He doesn't seem to mind that."

"All the more suspicious. D'you think an ordinary fisherman would stand that sort of behaviour from the fish for a week, let alone two? And of course," continued Mr. Doyle, "those horn-rimmed goggles of his simply clinch the matter, as far as Cattermole's concerned. As I told him, if you go up to London nowadays, you almost begin to feel there's something suspicious about the few people who don't go round looking like owls. But Cattermole, with his simple rustic standard of æsthetics, can't imagine anybody wearing such things except for purposes of disguise."

"Well, well!" said his daughter, rising to her feet and looking round for Bill. "I may be passing near the scene of the crime some time this morning, and if the body's been found, I'll let you know in time to fly the country."

"It's all very humorous, no doubt," grumbled Mr. Doyle. "These people will

believe anything since the Young Men's Christian Guild hall was turned into a cinema."

"Shocking degeneracy of village life," sighed Judy, and went out through the French window. Mr. Doyle, watching over the top of his paper, saw her open the garden gate and take the road towards the river.

Approaching the glowing beacon of the hawthorn on the river bank, Judy found that others beside herself had selected the riverside as a pleasant spot for a morning's stroll. Several small boys were sitting in a noisy heap upon the bank, and a group of elderly rustics—among whom Judy recognised the sagacious and venerable Cattermole—stood and conversed lugubriously under the hawthorn. Scraps of conversation of a melancholy and interesting character floated to Judy's ears as she approached.

"There were that chap up at Burton lake."

"Oh! Ah!"

"Never found, he weren't, not until he were unrecognisable 'cept for his braces."

"Oh! Ah!"

"Good morning, Cattermole," said Judy pleasantly. "Is there a regatta on, or something?"

"Miss Judy will have her joke," explained Cattermole dolefully to his circle.

"Oh! Ah!"

It seemed to Judy that as she approached the riverside a hush fell upon the group of urchins, and that they gazed at her with the greedy interest of sightseers in the Chamber of Horrors. They did not return her salutation. They merely gaped.

Mr. Massiter was sitting upon the opposite bank, his hands clasped round his knees, gazing gloomily at his audience. He had the air of a general who has just accomplished a strategic retirement and is pondering upon his next move. Judy waved to him, and he scrambled to his feet with an exclamation of joy.

"Reinforcements arrive at last!" he cried. "I suppose you *are* on my side?"

"Not yet," said Judy. "Am I to swim across?"

"I meant," explained the fisherman, "that I suppose your sympathies are with me and not with my besiegers?"

"I'm not sure," said Judy guardedly. "I have reason to believe you are not what you seem. As for your besiegers, their motive is one of pure hero-worship. For them you are Sherlock Holmes and Sexton



Blake in one. If you come over here, they'll probably ask you for your autograph."

"I don't understand——" the young man was beginning, when some distant vision caused him to break off with an exclamation of horror. "Heavens!" he ejaculated. "The village cop approaches! This is too much! I wish somebody would explain what it is about me that's so interesting this morning."

Looking over her shoulder, Judy saw the sturdy blue-clad form of the Little Hempsted constable laboriously negotiating the stile. Farther off, Mr. Doyle was negligently strolling across the field, as if pure chance were directing his steps towards the river.

"I am going to create an alibi," remarked the fisherman. "I am a modest and retiring person, and this is more than I can stand. Let us create two alibis, or should it be one between us? Meet me on the bridge. Farewell, dear children!" he cried to the round-mouthed urchins. "I leave you my rod and line, my lunch and my blessing."

When Judy stepped upon the little wooden bridge the other side of the bend, where the alders almost met above the river, Mr. Massiter had already arrived, and was leaning on the rail, looking thoughtfully into the water. He looked up as she approached, and met her eyes with a gaze as wide and solemn as her own.

"I don't know what you're laughing at," he remarked.

"Was I laughing? I didn't hear myself."

"It was silent laughter," he said, and gave way to the other kind, in which Judy joined him.

"All the same," he said, "I should really very much like to know what's up, how long it's going to be up, why those infernal gaping kids aren't at school, why those confounded muttering old men aren't in the lock-up or the lunatic asylum, and what they all see in me that they can beguile away a whole summer's morning looking at me. I consider that you, as my landlord, are answerable for this outrage. I came here to find peace and quiet."

"You'd better tell them so," said Judy calmly. "They think you came here to find a body."

"A what?"

"A body."

"Eh?"

Basil Massiter's eyes stared, round and startled, at Judy's serene face.

"A body," she repeated patiently. "A corpse. Human remains."

"But—— Whose?"

"Conjecture doesn't go so far as that. My father thinks it'll probably turn out to be one of his victims. You see, it's his river. In a short while he expects to feel the cold click of the handcuffs on his wrists. 'Who are you,' he will cry, 'who have discovered my guilty secret?' With a superb gesture you will remove your glasses. Detective Massiter of Scotland Yard!"

"But, my dear girl, do you mean to tell me——"

"I do."

"A detective—me!"

"Certainly. Why not? I'm inclined to think so myself. You are obviously no fisherman."

"Is it so noticeable?"

"Yet you must be something. Therefore you are a detective."

"The reasoning," murmured Mr. Massiter, "seems to me to be—er—faulty. I plead guilty, however, on the first count. I am no fisherman. I do not understand fish. I cannot get on with fish. Fish and I are incompatible."

"What, then," demanded Judy severely, "is the meaning of your rod and line?"

"An innocent deception," he murmured. He felt in his pocket and drew out a small tin box which had once contained tobacco.

"If that's live-bait, you needn't open the tin," said Judy, withdrawing the hem of her garment.

Mr. Massiter raised the lid with a reverent hand, and gazed fondly at the tin's contents. Judy's curiosity got the better of her.

Basil murmured: "*Utricularia vulgaris*."

"It looks more like slime to me," said Judy critically.

"Ah, you should see it through the microscope!" he cried enthusiastically. "Judy, believe me, I would give all the fish that were ever spawned for this little piece of green slime. I am writing a book about freshwater flora. I came to this delightful river of yours. I fell in love with it. I determined to stay. I bought the fishing rights. Why not? How else could I obtain undisturbed possession? I bought a rod and line. Why not? How else could I hope to pass as an ordinary sane human being?"

"You did not pass far," said Judy. "Our suspicions were aroused from the first. The genuine angler, of the true genus piscator, does not part with ten pounds for a bit of river in which fish only find themselves when they've lost their way."



However, I hope you'll manage to take your ten pounds out in flora."

Together they leant upon the rail, elbow by elbow, gazing down on to the winking green surface of the river.

"Judy," said the pseudo angler diffidently at last, "Judy, I have another confession to make. . . . In other words, there was something else I wanted to tell you . . . I mean to say—what I meant to say was. . . ."

A quarter of an hour, or perhaps half an hour, or possibly an hour later, the sound of cheering floated down the river to their ears.

"What was that?" said Judy dreamily.

"It sounds as if they've recovered the body without my help," remarked Basil. "Shall we go and see?"

They wandered leisurely back along the river towards the hawthorn tree. The rustic group still gave human interest to the landscape. Mr. Doyle was in the thick of it.

"You're just in time," he greeted them. "The monster of the deep. Caught by P. J. Doyle, of Little Hempsted, and landed, single-handed, without a net. On show for one minute only."

In the centre of the gaping crowd a small silver fish lay panting upon the grass. Mr. Doyle turned to Basil with a triumphant air.

"You'll excuse me, I hope, for poaching, but I felt that something should be done, in your absence, to entertain your visitors. Having shown my piscatorial skill, and

vindicated the reputation of this river as a well-known fishing resort, I will return Adolphus to his native element, with strict orders not to stray out of my preserves."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Judy," said Mr. Doyle afterwards, as they returned to their house and lunch—he paused as if dissatisfied with the tone of his own voice, and then, with an added severity, began again—"Judy, I could not help noticing this morning, during the episode of Adolphus, that our young friend Massiter and you—that you and our young friend Massiter—in short, that his arm was round your waist."

"Why not?"

"You may have thought nobody was looking. But Cattermole was. Cattermole always is. Baulked of his murder mystery, what may not Cattermole make of that—er—juxtaposition?"

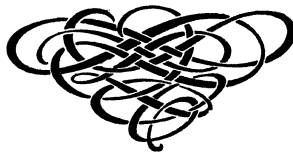
"Dear parent," said Judy, opening the garden gate, "he may make what he likes. Basil and I are affianced."

"Are a what?"

"Affianced. Betrothed. Engaged. Or, rather, we shall be when we have obtained your consent. Do you consent? Do you? Do you?"

She shut the gate between them and leant upon it with an intimidating air.

Mr. Doyle wrinkled up his forehead and cleared his throat. "Well," he began portentously, "I—er—I—er—oh, open the gate, Judy! Of course I consent. Why not?"



## A SONG FOR ALL SEASONS.

**I**N the deep essence of your eyes  
The perfume of your spirit lies,  
And one knows purer vallance  
After that accolade your glance.

You are not hard, you are not cold,  
You are but only diamond-souled;  
And diamond-white and diamond-fine  
Ever my love for you will shine.

WALLACE B. NICHOLS.





"She broke off with a little breathless laugh."

# CONFEDERACY

By PHILIPPA SOUTHCOMBE

ILLUSTRATED BY C. FLEMING WILLIAMS

**H**E had beached his boat in the little cove at that hour when the world wakes. Colourless yet, and silvered with dew, the bluff headland stood out into a quiet sea that flashed suddenly silver in the light that slid from beneath the frayed edge of a pale grey billow of cloud; the rocks were drawn in sepia tones; thrift fringed the cliff edge with the faintest silvery pink.

The man, glancing seawards as he dragged the dinghy up the sand, could see, just off the point, the gleaming whiteness of the big

steam yacht riding at anchor. For a moment he stood there, watching her; his grey eyes, keen and steady in his tanned face, held no hint of a pride that would surely have been pardonable. For the *Mallard* was a possession envied by many, and her owner designated a lucky beggar from the Clyde to the Antipodes.

There were those, to whom envy meant jealousy as well, who did not hesitate to say more; they declared that the *Mallard's* crew, besides being the smartest and most efficient that money could procure, possessed



also the merit of being the most discreet. But they did not say that in the hearing of the yacht's owner, perhaps because they were aware of his very excellent reputation as an amateur middle-weight.

Rarely enough was the *Mallard* seen in home waters; her cruises were long and frequent, and men knew her better, perhaps, north of the Tropic of Capricorn or round about the Philippines than up and down the English Channel.

To Fawcett the neighbourhood of that small quiet cove was quite new; he had never set foot in the village whose brown-thatched roofs could be glimpsed over the shoulder of the hill, just below the square white house, with its guardian clump of fir trees, that appeared to be the sole dwelling of any importance within sight.

He knew no more about it than Hermione had told him that day of their meeting, more than six months ago, what time the *Mallard* had tarried off the African coast, and Fawcett, encountering an acquaintance in the streets of Algiers, had accepted an invitation to dine ashore at the latter's hotel. Hermione Carrington had been of the party—a demure slip of a girl under the escort of a lively married cousin. He had thought her charming enough—too charming, indeed, for the man who rather aggressively monopolised her company—but since that day he had thought of her no more than that the name of the cove and hamlet should, after a moment's reflection, recall *her* name. So it was with no definite thought of seeing anything of her that Fawcett had rowed ashore, although he had contemplated exploring the place before returning to the yacht for lunch. His crew were well enough used to his ways, accustomed to carry out orders at the shortest notice and not to discuss them ashore. He had not intended, twenty-four hours ago, to anchor in the bay at all—his skipper was under orders for the coast of Spain—but the charm of the place, rimmed round with green hills, its white-washed coastguard cottages on the cliff, half a dozen boats drawn up on the brown shingle, seen across the water in the lavender and pearl of the June twilight, and perhaps the unconscious prompting of its remembered name, had resulted in his change of plan.

Looking seawards, he did not notice the approach of the girl who had come running down the rough track to the shore until she reached the strip of shingle. Then, since the lightest-footed damsel cannot traverse shingle without some warning sound of

approach, he heard her and swung round. For a moment they confronted one another in silence. On Fawcett's countenance was no betrayal of surprise at the apparition. After all, he had known she lived near, though he had not expected to encounter her, perhaps, at five in the morning. She was clad in a boyish white sweater and short grey skirt, and the red swimming suit she carried over her shoulder apparently explained her presence plainly enough, though not the need for hurry that had left her all rosy and breathless.

She looked very young as she stood there, surveying him with wide, serious eyes set in a little round face of flower-like charm, as if she waited for his recognition. When he held out his hand with a grave "Why, Miss Hermione!" she drew a long breath of relief.

"Oh, you *do* remember me! I was so afraid at first that you didn't. And—and that would have made it difficult. And I was dreadfully afraid that you'd row back to the yacht before I got here, or perhaps not land at all. And our old boat is done for, so I ran all the way——"

She broke off with a little breathless laugh. And Fawcett looked at her quickly, for her words made it quite clear that this was no chance encounter, but one deliberately planned, and the discovery was rather surprising.

He said simply: "No, I've not forgotten you. Did you see the old *Mallard* come in last night?"

She nodded. "Yes. But I couldn't come then, without being missed, you know, even if you'd come ashore. I was awfully afraid you'd leave in the night, so I stayed by my window and watched—I could see your lights—and directly it was getting light I got ready to come, and then I saw you rowing ashore. You see, your coming is the most wonderful piece of luck in the world, if only you are going—in the right direction."

He laughed in spite of himself "Isn't that rather a nicely qualified welcome?" And then, as he saw the real anxiety in the wide hazel eyes: "Which way did you want me to go?"

"I—I was hoping you meant to go south—fairly soon. You see, Guy's stationed at Gibraltar now, and I thought perhaps, if you were going there, you wouldn't mind giving him a—a message for me. It's—rather important."

He looked at her curiously, amused, perhaps, at the quaint way in which she



took for granted that he would know who "Guy" was, despite that very brief acquaintance, and strangely arrested by her deep seriousness. A sudden memory of the young soldier who had been of the party at Algiers was illuminating. If that were the "Guy" for whom the important message was intended—Fawcett's face went suddenly hard. Apparently the young man had not made a good impression.

Hermione was explaining, still rather breathlessly, yet with a little air of strengthening confidence that must have been inspired by Fawcett's silence, since he had said nothing to encourage it.

He gathered that he was to be entrusted with a letter and a package for Guy; that the said package contained something of value that must not be risked in transit by post, more especially as Guy's whereabouts were subject to sudden change.

"He has rather a special sort of post," said Hermione seriously, "and he says that he has to move from place to place at very short notice, though he returns to headquarters every month or so. At present his headquarters are Gibraltar, and he has cabled to me to bring this with me. You see, he thinks that I am coming out again with my cousin Susan, who was going to join her husband in Egypt next month. But now her plans are altered, and she is not going until November. I was wondering what I could do, when I saw your yacht come into the bay. The old coastguard read out her name, and then, of course, I remembered, and I knew that if only you happened to be going south, it would be all right."

Fawcett said nothing. At her last sentence his weathered, hard-bitten countenance had slowly reddened, almost, it would seem, as if her tacit avowal of unquestioning confidence dealt him a shock that wasn't a sorry one.

Hermione went on hurriedly: "I mean—of course, if it will really fit in with the plans of your—your cruise?"

"Excellently," said Fawcett, who had not intended going within two hundred miles of Gibraltar. Her relief made shining stars of her eyes.

"Oh, it's the luckiest chance, isn't it? Nothing could have been better."

"Except your having gone yourself," amended Fawcett.

The obviousness of the remark jarred a little. Somehow, despite their brief acquaintance, Hermione was aware that it

was not like Fawcett to make obvious remarks. She gave him a quick, little puzzled glance, and although she laughed, the laugh held a rueful, uncertain note, and the colour suddenly flamed red in her small face.

Yet Fawcett's keen glance dwelt on her with a sort of grave relentlessness, almost as if he was reflecting on the accuracy of the "obvious" statement. There was an odd little pause. Then Hermione said quickly: "You are going to-day? I have brought the packet."

His hesitation was so brief as to be barely perceptible. "I think so—yes. It would be better if he received it as soon as possible?"

"If it really will make no difference to your plans? You see, if I had come as it was arranged—as Guy still believes it is arranged—I was to have sailed to-morrow. He knew that, and he will have timed the arrival of the P. and O., and his own movements are so uncertain."

Fawcett said quietly, "I understand," and held out his hand for the package—a small, flat affair, heavily sealed, and a letter addressed in Hermione's big, rather scrawly writing.

Hermione said, "Thank you most awfully," and smiled. There followed a moment's rather awkward silence. For there was, it seemed, no more to be said, and the very brevity of their acquaintance was somehow emphasised by that with which the thing had been arranged.

In those few minutes the pearl and silver light had warmed to gold. In the dazzle of morning sunlight the *Mallard* rose, whitely clean-cut, on a sea as blue and satiny as a periwinkle flower, and on the beach Hermione stood and looked at her as at the goodly sight she was—the more goodly, of course, because she was to be the means of that precious packet reaching Guy at Gibraltar in time.

"I will get away at once," said Fawcett at last, "since the sooner the better. And when the packet's safely handed over, I'll cable you." And for the second time he held out his hand.

Hermione gripped it frankly and a little desperately, because for the first time she was possessed with an odd sense of unreality. She said, "I'll help you push the boat off," and was somehow grateful to him for not protesting against her assistance. Two minutes later she was watching him pull seawards with long, powerful strokes. She



waited there on the beach, and Fawcett, nearing the yacht, could see her, a slim motionless figure, shading her eyes from the level dazzle of the sunlight. He did not signal to her, but it was not until long

anchor for a day or two—as others of their kind had done before them—and of the subsequent spending of a little money in the village, possibly inclusive of the standing of a few pints of beer to an old man who



"His exclamation brought the doctor's attention from his patient with a jerk."

afterwards that the omission occurred to him.

At ten o'clock that morning an old fisherman who, in the intervals of mending a crab-pot, had been glancing thoughtfully seawards, lifted his head with a snort of disgust. He had been speculating on the probability of the strangers remaining at

could tell them more than most about this piece of coast. And now these pleasant hopes were shattered by the sound that came across the water on the still summer morning air—the sound of the *Mallard's* engines. Surely enough, the yacht was moving.

The old man watched her move, without



the admiration he had professed for her when she had entered the bay. "Burds o' passage," he said sourly, "burds o' passage." And then, more cheerfully: "But there'll be fog afore night-time."



"It seems that the mystery of the Van Revel jewels is solved at last."

There was no sign of it, however, when at noon Fawcett stood frowning by the *Mallard's* rail. Ever since they had got under way he had been oddly grim and restless, and the dour Scottish skipper, who had taken the yacht many thousands of miles, had more than once glanced at him reflectively. But he never permitted himself the slightest criticism of the owner's actions, and when a subordinate ventured a comment on the subject, the latter was promptly snubbed.

The subordinate also prophesied fog, looking out, keen-eyed, to the faint white blur that was just dimming the blue clearness of the horizon. He recalled Fawcett's order to make all speed possible, and wondered how far the fog would impede them.

Fawcett himself was not looking seawards at all. He was looking back at the cliffs they were leaving behind, and used as his crew were to his quick commands and countermands, they would certainly have been astounded had they known the fierce impulse that urged him then—the impulse to give the order: "*Put back to the cove we have left and drop anchor again.*"

He wanted to go back. With all the force of a strong and sudden realisation driving a lifelong way of knowing what he wanted and setting out to get it, he wanted once more to row ashore to the little beach below the pink thrift-fringed cliffs, to take the road leading up to the white house on the hill, to talk again with a slim, grave-eyed girl who had found the briefest of acquaintance sufficient for all her confidence in a man of whom she might well have thought very differently.

He wanted that, and yet he was making all speed ahead, with a message that was of the greatest importance and value to Guy.

He called himself a fool. For a moment the order he could still give became fiercely imperative. He even turned in the direction of the bridge, where Macalister's square figure stood clear-cut against the blue. But he checked himself. The *Mallard* kept her course, cutting a creamy arrow of foam through the blue waters of the bay, heading south-west.

And Fawcett went down to the saloon for lunch with a smile of that quality that had marred its pleasantness frequently enough to have drawn those lines of bitterness about the corners of his well-cut mouth.

The little blur on the horizon had advanced up the blue floor of the bay in a drifting wreath of white sea-fog; into the summer morning warmth had crept a little chill air. When Fawcett returned on deck he could no longer see either coastline or horizon, for the fog wreath had become a shroud whose density was increasing momentarily. As the young engineer had foreseen, the "owner" was impatient of the fog that threatened to baulk his plans. For, having resisted that impulse to turn back, he was restlessly determined to carry out his errand with the least possible delay. Guy should have his package, for thus Hermione would be served. But he had



reckoned without the fog. It became a question of groping, and Macalister betrayed anxiety by looking a shade more dour than usual. He knew that they were in the route of the big Atlantic liners.

So they groped for an hour. Then the jarring, scraping crash came without any warning at all. The efficiency and control of the *Mallard's* crew told then. But they could not save the yacht, for, run down by a Southampton-bound liner, she was cut in two. The sea was calm enough, and though the density of the fog spelt ever-lurking danger, luck held, and a cheer went up when it was found that the liner's boats had succeeded in picking up all the yacht's crew. The only casualty of any seriousness was that of the owner, who was lifted on board unconscious and with a broken leg, having evidently been thrown heavily down when the yacht was struck. It was one of the *Mallard's* crew who drew attention to the thing in Fawcett's clenched hand.

"Before he went off faint he was saying as how he mustn't lose it or let it get damaged. No, sir, I don't know what it is."

The ship's doctor set Fawcett's leg, pronounced his other injuries negligible, and then had leisure to remember the man's words. Fawcett had fallen asleep, and his fingers had relaxed their hold on the object in question—a sodden packet from which the outer covering had evidently been accidentally torn in the recent vicissitudes. As his hand unclenched, it fell to the cabin floor, apparently a brine-soaked roll of wash-leather. The liner's captain, who was present, retrieved it and unrolled it with the intention of getting it dry. His exclamation brought the doctor's attention from his patient with a jerk.

For the diamond and ruby necklace revealed to their gaze was not alone remarkable for being worth thirty thousand pounds. Across its winking brilliance the two men looked at one another. Then the doctor said in an odd voice—

"It seems that the mystery of the Van Revel jewels is solved at last."

The Captain said nothing. He looked back from the necklace to Fawcett's unconscious countenance and back again, and he frowned. Of Fawcett's reputation he was as well aware as anyone, but it was not the reputation of a thief.

The *Mallard's* cruises had indeed been spiced with diversions mysterious and varied—diversions in which she had played a delicately elusive part, and which, according

to rumour, had included smuggling of rifles, even of rum, and once of a gentleman in a hurry to change his location. But with all there had been a sort of saving grace of risk and adventure, a Robin Hood freedom and absence of trickery or greed, whereas the affair of the Van Revel jewel robbery had held a notably sordid connection. The Captain, recalling that story, said bluntly that he'd never have associated Fawcett with an affair of that kind. But he had to admit that circumstances were suspicious enough, for the *Mallard* had been cruising off the Algerian coast at the very time when the jewels were stolen, and Fawcett had dined ashore at the same hotel where Mrs. Van Revel had been staying.

"Looks black enough, doesn't it? At least, it'll take some explaining," the Captain admitted grimly. And then he broke off with an exclamation, for Fawcett, his face white and twisted with pain, had raised himself on his elbow and was staring at the shining beauty of the jewels in the other's hand.

"Was *that* in the packet?" he demanded.

The two men looked at him very hard. If he were acting now, he was clever indeed. There was no doubt that he had heard sufficient of the conversation to be aware that the jewels were recognised. They were, indeed, unique, and the stir caused by their disappearance had emphasised the fact. Fawcett, who knew that the Captain's allusions to the affair were true enough, found the connection of it with Hermione intolerable. Vividly he recalled the picture of her there in the clear sweetness of the June dawn, her fresh, flower-like face upturned to his as she entrusted him with that "very important package for Guy." She couldn't have known—he would never believe that she had known—its contents; but whatever happened—and he supposed ruefully that things would now happen speedily enough—it should never be known that Hermione had had any connection with the affair at all. That, at least, he could do for the girl because of whom he had so nearly taken the *Mallard* back to anchorage.

The Captain, unwilling, as he honestly was, to doubt Fawcett's explanation, was yet forced to find it unsatisfactory. Fawcett averred that he had not known the contents of the packet, yet on the subject of how he had come by it, and why he had guarded it so jealously, he kept a coolly obstinate silence. So far only the Captain and the



surgeon knew of the affair; but within a few hours the liner would reach Southampton, and it would then be a question if the police as well as the hospital authorities would be interested in the case of Harry Fawcett.

Meanwhile the Captain kept the custody of the jewels, and Fawcett lay with a set face and swore to himself that Hermione had not known.

Owing to the delays of the fog, it was nine o'clock in the morning when the liner docked at Southampton, and when, accompanied by the surgeon, Fawcett was being driven through the town, newsboys were crying the morning contents of their placards: "Well-known yacht run down in the fog by the *Marionic*. Owner seriously injured."

The "owner" permitted himself a brief grin. Then his face changed. Their progress had been held up by a slight block in the traffic, and a boy was yelling close by: "Startling development of the Van Revel jewel robbery. Woman confederate reveals the truth. Full particulars!"

"Get a paper," said Fawcett between his teeth.

The surgeon hesitated. His patient was also a suspected criminal, and, as such, perhaps his request must be considered. But an instinctive liking for the man, coupled with the realisation of his present helplessness, prevailed. A moment later Fawcett had the sheet with the "full particulars" in his hand.

Put briefly, the truth revealed was that Guy Cardew, late Captain in the —th, had stolen the necklace from the hotel in Algiers, and the Frenchwoman who had been his confederate in this and in previous minor affairs had, from some motive of revenge provided by a recent quarrel, suddenly turned informant and betrayed him. He had been arrested on ample proof, but the chief part of his booty—the famous ruby and diamond necklace—could not be traced. His confederate averred that he had managed to smuggle it away until such time as he could more safely dispose of the jewels, but he had not confided in her, she added vindictively, and it seemed she had been speaking the truth. For only the *Mallard's* owner knew that Cardew had used the friendship of an English girl, candid and simple and fresh, to further his purpose. And of all who in various degrees censured the defaulter, none regarded him

as Fawcett did, for to Fawcett alone was he the man who had dared to make a cat's-paw of Hermione Carrington.

\* \* \* \* \*  
Twenty-four hours later the *Marionic's* captain, taking his vessel out of Southampton Water on her return trip, reflected on the further sensation in store for the newspaper-reading public, and forecasted the manner of its conveyance: "Thirty-thousand pounds jewels mysteriously restored to their owner."

That was how it would read, no doubt, and none would know the whole of the story behind. He was aware that he did not even know it himself, but had stoutly confessed himself prepared to take the risk. Fawcett had indeed told him more of his own part in the affair—enough, at least, to convince the other of his honesty—but he had zealously withheld any hint of Hermione's connection with it, and the Captain, although he had been shrewd enough to guess at a girl in the case, chivalrously refrained from further insistence, since the real offender had been caught and the jewels returned.

At the very moment of which reflection a girl with hazel eyes, which looked very big and serious in a small pale face, stared down at the *Mallard's* owner and said:

"I couldn't come before. I didn't know until yesterday. Then the papers came. They said 'seriously injured.' I had to find you, because it was my fault. If you hadn't gone in the fog—And it was for—that!" She sat down, suddenly shaky, in the big chair that had been placed for her, facing him. "The—the packet," she said unsteadily, "was that, too, something to do with—with it all?"

So he told her, very gently and briefly, adding that the jewels had been returned. Words were not going to help much. As he thought of Guy Cardew his hands clenched. Hermione gave a little cry.

"Oh, did you think, when you saw the necklace, that—I knew?"

And perhaps in all his life Fawcett had never been so glad of anything as of the fact that he could honestly refute that suspicion.

"No, I—could not think that."

"I—I never asked Guy what was in the packet," she said. "He always gave me to understand that it contained some personal papers—notes for a technical book he meant to write, which he did not want to risk losing. You see, he often had to travel



at an hour's notice, and with no baggage at all. So I did not think it strange that he should give me the packet to take care of for him until he should want it. And then, when he asked me to bring it out to him, I thought, of course, it was because he knew he would be at Gibraltar for some time, and would have opportunity to write his book." She gave a little, broken laugh. "And all the time he was keeping the jewels until he found an opportunity of disposing of them without being—found out. And I made you a confederate without knowing it." Suddenly she looked at him. "And you—you kept them safe—when you were hurt, not knowing what they were!"

He met her glance gravely. "If it served you——" he said, and broke off. "Hermione, do you remember saying that

nothing could have been better than my going?"

She nodded, looking away. "Yes. And you said except I had come myself."

"That—wasn't true, even then?"

"No, I—I wasn't sorry that I couldn't go. You see, I'd—I'd begun to realise that—I didn't care for Guy enough, after all."

Upon which followed a long silence. Then Fawcett said slowly: "We hadn't started an hour before I wanted to turn back—nearly gave the order, in fact. You see, I felt I had to see you again."

Hermione turned to face him with an odd little laugh. "Oh!" she said. "But you couldn't have—really heard me, could you?"

An inconsequent remark which Fawcett yet understood.



## THE OLD POET.

**U**P through the long-neglected lane,  
Which daily now is trimmed and lopped,  
The fine old poet walks in pain,  
Praying that these reforms be stopped,

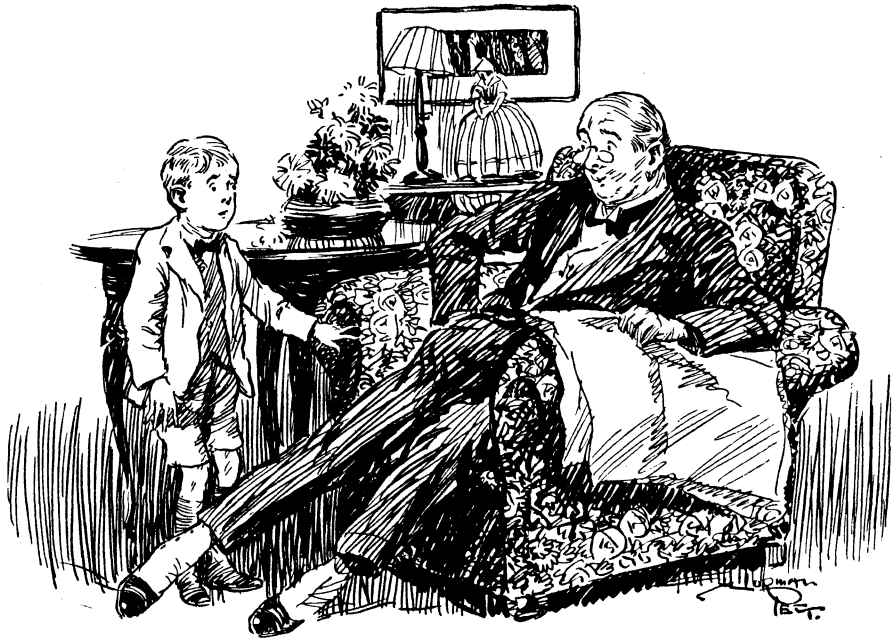
Since every bough that falls for him  
Is laid on some beloved grave,  
By now in memory growing dim  
Above the witty or the brave.

Remembering all that once he saw,  
Remembering all that might have been,  
He walks alone amid the raw  
Improving, uglier-growing scene.

Grey is his face, pathetic, too,  
As some forgotten fossil thing:  
His eyes in tears half miss the view,  
Remembering, remembering.

VICTOR PLARR.





#### A WISE PRECAUTION.

SMALL NEPHEW: That shilling you gave me, Uncle, has slipped through a hole in my pocket.

UNCLE: Well, here's another. Don't let it do the same.

NEPHEW: Perhaps half-a-crown would be safer, wouldn't it, Uncle?

## THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK

### THE COLLECTOR.

*By Violet M. Methley.*

I RECOGNISED him as a fellow-collector at once. From his seat at the further end of the omnibus I saw his eyes fixed upon my hand and what it held, and there was the unmistakable light of acquisitiveness in those eyes above the woollen muffler.

I have myself gone to sorry extremes in the pursuit of my besetting sin—Le Blond prints. But, even so, I was taken aback when the stranger edged himself along the space of velvet seat between us and held out his hand, saying simply—

"Give it to me! I want it."

I gasped.

"B-but I can't let you have it! I—I want it myself," I stammered feebly and unconvincingly.

"I want it," he repeated. "I haven't got that one."

He twitched the prize—the treasure which I had only just purchased for far more than its obvious value—from my weak and unresisting fingers and gloated over it.

"It's very rare," he said, and I could see that the tiny slip of tinted printed paper was an object of reverence to him.

"Would you like to see some of mine?" he said, and I nodded, keeping a wary eye meanwhile on that treasure of my own, which I certainly did not mean to relinquish to this pirate without a struggle.

He removed a pair of shapeless woollen gloves with difficulty and produced from some hidden recess, under a bulky coat, an old pocket-book. Slowly he spread out the contents upon the seat beside him.

It was a most amazing collection. There seemed literally hundreds of specimens, and no two were alike. Red, blue, white, green, purple—all the colours of the spectrum glowed on those slips of paper, and I recognised at a glance that all England must have been scoured to obtain them.

For I viewed them with a connoisseur's eye. That specimen could only have come from the Dorking neighbourhood, that other from somewhere in the vicinity of the Whitechapel Road, and this one, with blue and white as the prevailing colours—no, I was not mistaken: I had last seen its fellow in Paris; he could have bought it nowhere else.

"That's a German one," my fellow-collector said solemnly. "My brother gave it to me. He got it in Cologne."



I nodded understandingly. I had already recognised the unmistakable purple colour—a little crude, perhaps. . . .

"It's a splendid collection," I said fervently, and then made an involuntary movement as I saw his hand tighten over my own particular specimen.

"I say, I—I rather want that back," I said nervously, for I had already recognised that I had to do with a dominant personality, with one who would be ruthless in the pursuit of his aims. He might quite well be capable of destroying the fragile thing he held, rather than return it to me. It sounds inconceivable, I know, but collectors are a race apart.

"I want it," he repeated doggedly. "You

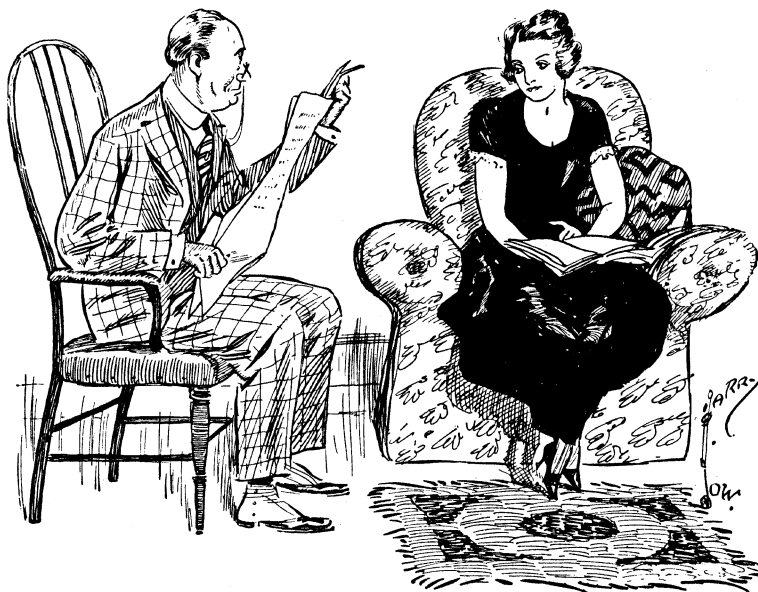
For a moment I wavered, then weakly yielded.

"Take it," I said, and closed his gloved hand over the tiny paper slip which meant so much.

"Oh, thank you!" he said, and bent his head with a half-stifled sound of emotion.

From behind him came the harsh voice of the tall female as the omnibus ground to a standstill.

"Now, then, Master Jim, you are *not* to blow your nose on the collar of your coat—no, nor yet on your gloves! I'll get out your handkerchief when we've got down. And if you don't pick up all those nasty, dirty old 'bus tickets this minute, you'll have to leave them behind! Your collection indeed!"



CHRONOLOGICAL EXACTITUDE.

"WHAT train does that man next door get, Horace?"

"The one after mine, dear."

"If it's the one after yours, how do you know?"

"Because that's the one I catch!"

can get another if you are going to St. Albans. You *know* you can."

I was silent. It was true. I *could* get another, but at what a cost?

My whole being revolted against this tyranny. I struggled against the impulse to snatch back this prize which was lawfully mine. And it had been mine for so short a time. Why should I be compelled to yield it to this stranger?

The omnibus was slowing down. He rose, and so did his female companion at the other end of the seat.

"I've got to get out here," he said, and suddenly stooped to plead. "*Do* let me have it!" he said, and I could have sworn that there were tears in his eyes.

HE was bound to come sooner or later, the man who had seen everything that could be seen at the British Empire Exhibition. He turned up at the club the other evening and held forth.

There was not a single spot in the entire show that he had left unvisited. And he had done it thoroughly, mind you. None of your rushing through the courts and glancing from side to side, but a thorough investigation of every exhibit from A to Z.

Then the quiet member got a word in. "Did you," he inquired, "come across that remarkable machine for punching holes in crumpets?"

"Oh, yes, rather!" said the explorer. "Wonderful, isn't it?"

"It would be," remarked the quiet member, "only it wasn't there."

A FRENCHMAN has invented a machine which will play fourteen musical instruments at once. It is thought that he must have been annoyed by a neighbour's piano.

A LADY has just married a man whom she had refused twenty-three times. "This is so sudden, George!" she said.





AS IT HAPPENED.

VISITOR: And I suppose you have studied agriculture all your life?

RUSTIC: Never no time for culture, missy, of any saart—always just had to keep on farmin'.



THE ODDS.

FIRST LOAFER (indicating small but pugnacious one approaching): This little cove tried to fight about forty of us down at "The Blue Lion" last night.

SECOND LOAFER: Wot 'appened?

FIRST LOAFER: Oh, we was one too many for 'im!



## PLANTAGENET SETTLES DOWN.

*By Mowbray Taylor.*

THE dealer said Plantagenet was a thoroughbred, Olivia said "It must be, the dear!" and cuddled it close, and the dealer named his price accordingly. What I said does not matter. It never does. That, in short, is how Plantagenet came to live with us.

Except that I tripped over him about twice hourly, for three days nothing happened. Plantagenet moped about the place, sniffing

Olivia laughed. If you knew Olivia, you would expect her to laugh. Olivia's sense of humour is astounding.

"That's right!" I exclaimed testily. "Laugh! The butter and my trousers and the marmalade are ruined, but go on! Laugh! Be happy, and blow the expense!"

And as I spoke I selected the largest bun on the table and raised my arm. But Plantagenet, divining my intention, leapt on to Olivia's lap, so instead of throwing the bun I ate it.

That was the first crisis. The second crisis occurred the same evening. No sooner had I sat down to dinner—a weary, business-worn man—than Plantagenet sprang upon the table and began brazenly to lap up my soup.

Olivia at the time was rattling crockery in the kitchen. I called her.

"Look at this!" I said crossly.

Plantagenet, at the sharpness of my tone, looked up from the soup. Quite plainly the expression in his eyes said: "I say, old man, you quite startled me!"

"If you think I'm going to put up with this sort of thing," I went on, as Plantagenet lowered his head and continued his lapping, "you're mistaken. This poodle may bear an aristocratic name, but it certainly was not brought up in the best circles!... Yes, go on! Laugh! Don't mind me. I'm only a husband!"

Olivia's sense of humour, I have said, is astounding. It is more. It is positively overwhelming. Her low gurgle expanded into a ripple, the ripple developed into a

roar—or as near to a roar as Olivia can get.

Deliberately I lifted the soup from the table, placed it on the floor, and invited Plantagenet, with studied courtesy, to continue.

By the time Olivia had become too weak to laugh, Plantagenet had finished the soup.

"The dog is now ready for his fish," I said,



## QUITE CONVENIENT.

WIFE'S VOICE (from upstairs): You are back very quickly, dear.

HUSBAND (who went out ten minutes previously to try a new motor-cycle):

Er—yes—dear—I got a lift on an ambulance!

haughtily at his food, repulsing our advances. He simply would not settle down.

On the fourth day, however, Plantagenet decided to take an active interest in life. He sprang on to the breakfast-table, investigated the butter-dish too closely with his nose, and jumped to the floor *via* the marmalade and my trousers.



with heavy sarcasm. "Pray don't keep him waiting."

"Oh, don't!" Olivia wailed. "I—I can't laugh any more!"

I made a weary gesture. "It seems," I said, "that the household is against me. I work, I slave—for a dog. My wife's affection for me is dead, or, rather, transferred to a poodle. Said poo——"

Olivia held up her hands beseechingly. "Let me——" she began.

"Said poodle," I continued inexorably, "imbibes starving husband's soup. No words

Oh, Bill, how lucky Plantagenet noticed it! I might have given him *your* soup!"

Another moment and Olivia had placed some more soup before me.

I looked at it. Then I looked suspiciously at Plantagenet, who blinked back at me contentedly from the armchair. Still more suspiciously I looked at Olivia. And as I looked Olivia smiled. . . . I doubt whether anyone in this world has a more disarming smile than Olivia's.

But I'll swear that my soup was no different from Plantagenet's!



#### THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION

"HELEN has a beautiful antique tea service. It has been in her family for over two hundred years."  
"That proves what I said: her people never kept servants."

of reproof escape wife's lips. On the contrary, wife thinks it delightfully funny. In other words——"

"But, dear——"

"In other words, said poodle is more important than husband."

"But, dear," Olivia burst out, "I'm glad Plantag——"

"Great guns!" I ejaculated. "What a wife! She's glad! She's actually glad her husband's been robbed of his soup!"

Olivia protested with a low ripple of laughter. "No, silly," she said, "I'm glad because—— because that soup was *made* for Plantagenet. Boiled puppy biscuits and bones, you know. . .

#### THE DIFFERENCE.

"Romance," the poet said earnestly,  
And ruffled up his hair,  
"Why, sir, it is the breath of Life!  
One finds it everywhere.

"Now, how you met your Gwendolen—  
An old-world garden . . . there  
She stood amongst the roses red,  
The sunlight on her hair. . . .

"Was e'er Romance more beautiful?"  
Said I: "I met my wife  
In a garden, planting cabbages,  
And that, my boy, is Life."

P. G. N. Chambers.



## A HOLIDAY FRIENDSHIP.

E'en now I do not know the name you're bearing  
 (Fidèle or Jacques or something far more *chic*)  
 Out in your mountain home where (greatly daring)  
 I sought to scale the humbler kinds of peak!  
 I only know 'twas I that you selected  
 To be your comrade all a long day through,  
 And that is why, by gratitude directed,  
 I tune my lyre to you.

When, *sac à dos*, at dawn you saw me stalking  
 Your village through, you somehow seemed to feel  
 "Here is a fellow plainly bent on walking,  
 This is the man for me," and came to heel;  
 "No matter where he goes to-day, my way's his,"  
 Nor could I check your fixed resolve to roam;  
 My Polytechnic French contains no phrases  
 For bidding dogs "Go home."

Daylong you gave me all your best devotion,  
 And when, at even, we approached *chez vous*,  
 Lest owners blamed me for your truant notion,  
 You tactfully withdrew.

I love our Allies well and found them charming,  
 Since every soul I happened to address,  
 Using an accent frequently alarming,  
 Displayed to me *la parfaite politesse*;  
 I mean no disrespect to those around you,  
 Yet not o'er much your worth do I enhance  
 When I declare, Fidèle or Jacques, I found you  
 The friendliest thing in France.

T. Hodgkinson.



JIM: Hullo! This whole menu is in French.

JACK: That's all right—I can eat anything.



## AN UNDERESTIMATE.

COUNSEL: After all, my client is charged only with simple theft.  
 DEFENDANT (indignantly): Simple! I'd like to see you do it!

For all the many hours of daylight's lasting  
 You wandered with me through a sunlit land,  
 Scampered ahead, but flatteringly casting  
 Fond looks behind to see I was at hand,  
 Loll'd at my feet the many times I rested,  
 And, if the rest prolonged began to bore,  
 Sought with cold nose my fingers, and suggested  
 'Twas time to move once more.

And when, all difficulties circumvented,  
 I sprawled at ease upon the top to see  
 The outspread view, you also sprawled, contented  
 If you could gaze adoringly at me.

THE young man in the Pullman car, seeing that a handsome girl was looking at him very intently, thought he had made an impression, and in a few minutes changed his seat to the vacant one beside her.

"Haven't we met before somewhere?" he ventured to ask.

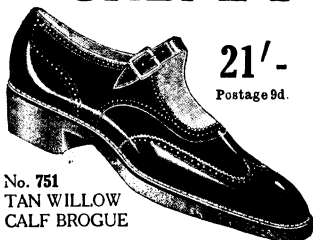
"Well, I'm not quite sure," she replied, "but I think you are the man I saw hanging around the night our motor-car was stolen."

The young man vanished into the smoking car amid the sniggers of those who had overheard them.



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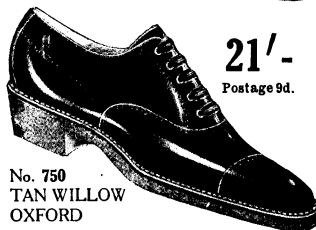
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# ANOTHER HOUSING PROBLEM.

THE chief problem of the day for many of us is, of course, the discovery of a house, but, once one is found, the most serious question that arises is undoubtedly that of the hall.

For nowadays a fetish is being made of the little—or big, according to the point of view—square entrance hall, and how to furnish it has become the burning question of the hour—at any rate, for Mary and myself.

The idea of a baronial hall, even of modern dimensions, is alluring, but now we have acquired one our troubles have begun. For we are seeking instinctively to emulate the use of it made by those baronial ancestors of ours who returned to it tired and hungry from hunting the boar, signing the Magna Carta, and other rough field sports.

They, we recall, were wont to dine in their hall, but ours, as a little experiment shows, will barely accommodate an afternoon tea. Where they drained their beakers we can barely sip a liqueur without abrading our funny-bone on the banisters, and when we come to consider other aspects of the baronial life, our difficulties grow even more acute.

No mediæval romance is complete without a reference to the hounds gnawing their bones among the rushes in the hall, but, apart from the fact that the rushes are needed for the drawing-room fireplace in summer, both hounds and bones are out of proportion to the dimensions of our hall. White mice toying with a trifle of cheese are more to scale, but they hardly strike the same note.

Even if we are content to waive the question of appropriate livestock, the furnishing of the hall remains a problem. Hung round with trophies of the chase and the weapons of its owner, the old hall had a character up to

which we aspire to live in vain. The mementoes of our sporting prowess somehow look out of place on a wall, nor is it quite fair to a visitor to allow the mug we won at hoop-la to burst upon him suddenly in all its splendour. It is the sort of thing that ought to be broken to him gently.

As for weapons, the tin hat and crossed pack straps that alone remain to recall the glories



A GOOD OPPORTUNITY.

SANDY: Man, Ah like yer prices. Wull ye dir-rect me tae yer boot deparitment?

of our military career seem strangely insignificant, and serve only to remind beholders that whereas the ancient owner of a baronial hall was summoned to Parliament, we were only detailed for cook-house fatigue—equally useful, of course, but not the stuff out of which romance is made.





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have pleasant dreams  
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is nothing to compare with

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which has never disappointed me—and  
never will.



Nor is the problem solved when we abandon all attempt to recall the days when the hall was the centre of the life of the household. Are we to make it a chamber or a cloak-room, or should we leave the decision to our guest, asking him if he would prefer to hang his coat or take his coffee in the hall? There will be no room to do both, but the mere elements of hospitality demand that he should be given the choice, if only to afford him a chance of flattering his host by choosing the coffee in spite of his susceptibility to draughts.

And that at bottom is the great drawback to the modern hall. It relies too entirely upon its draughts to justify its claim to be regarded as "a large airy apartment."  
*Theta.*

A MAN preaching on temperance received a lot of ridicule.

"You should learn respect for a teetotaler," he said warmly, "and never run him down."

A man jumped up from the back row.

"Sir," he asked excitedly, "how can a motorist tell a teetotaler from other people?"



"YES, my dear, she was frightfully annoyed because there were thirteen of us at her dinner."

"I didn't know she was superstitious."

"She isn't, but she only possesses twelve of everything."



TELLING TOO SOON.

THE INEVITABLE SMALL BOY: Quick! Train bein' held up!

POLICEMAN: Where?

THE INEVITABLE SMALL BOY: Round the corner—at a wedding!

#### TIES OF AFFECTION.

Whatever, Love, of me you ask  
I could not say you "No!"  
I crave for some titanic task  
My fervour deep to show.  
I shall not flinch, however stern  
May be the test you choose.  
The rules of Mah-Jongg I will learn,  
Or how to dance the Blues.

To do your bidding day by day  
Would be a labour sweet.  
My fortune, when it's made, I'll lay  
In homage at your feet.  
But though for you I'll live—or die,  
My heart at one thing fails—  
Ask me not, Love, to wear that tie  
You purchased at "the Sales"!

*Robert Higginbotham.*

"I HEAR you had McPherson staying with you for the week-end," said Jones. "What did you do with him on Saturday evening? Take him to a music-hall?"

"No, I didn't care to take the risk," replied Brown. "You see, he might have laughed in church on Sunday."



A SHEEP with a double fleece was recently found in a New Zealand flock. It probably thought of coming to Wembley and had heard about our climate.



THEY have a bird at the Zoo with a cry which drowns the sound of a jazz band. Nature seems to have a remedy for all diseases.





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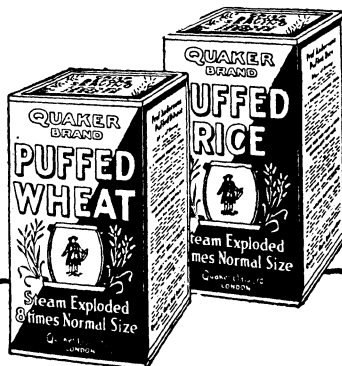
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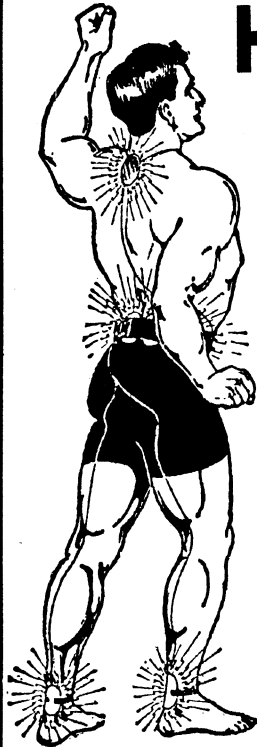
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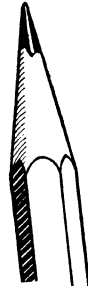
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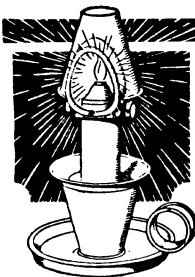
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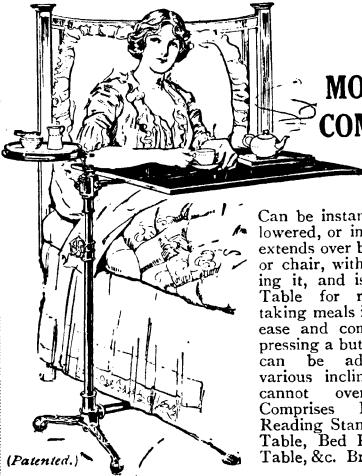
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As essential as Fresh Air. Destroyed after use, infection is averted in NASAL CATARRH, INFLUENZA, COLDS, Pure white, soft "Silky Fibre," 50 for 2/-. Also "Papier Crepon," thicker, 50 for 1/9. Equally indispensable for use with Complexion Creams.

Get "TOINOCO" brand at your chemist's or Dept. W, TOINOCO HANDKERCHIEF CO., LTD., 55, HATTON GARDEN, London.

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Ladies suffering the embarrassment of thick, shapeless ankles are invited to communicate with—

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To mark the introduction to the WINDSOR MAGAZINE readers of the wonderful new

## "AURADE"

we invite applications for particulars of our 7 DAYS' FREE TRIAL

and copy of Report by "Science Siftings."

All that is seen.

Perfect in its conception, the "Aurade" is made in numerous shapes and styles to suit every known form of deafness. It is practically invisible in use for both men and women, and conveys sounds perfectly in their natural tones. Doctors regularly send their patients to us to be fitted—in itself a strong recommendation. Those who are able to should call for free personal demonstration.

THE DEAF AID CO., LTD.,

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## ASTHMA CAN BE CURED

Try POTTER'S Smoking Mixture and Cigarettes for Outdoors.

Thousands of delighted users of Potter's Asthma Cure prove it. Gives relief in most obstinate cases. Of Chemists 1/6, or 1/9 from Makers:

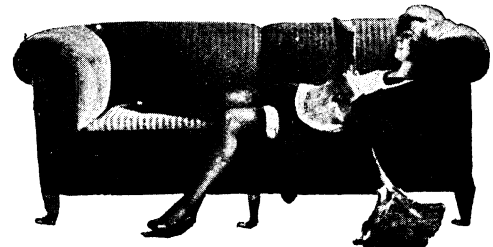
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## PARIS PICTURES. "MAID AND MAG"

is title of this charming Camera study. Size 9 ins. by 7 ins., 4/6 post free. We have Parisian pictures by Kirchner, Fontan, Meunier, Salon Pictures, Post Cards. Catalogue with 133 miniatures 1/- post free (Abroad 1/3). Or catalogue and set of Parisian Girl camera 2/9. Special 20/- Colonial Selection: 2 photos, 2 colour prints, camera study, 2 packets Parisian postcards and catalogue. Write or call: THE BELL PRESS (Dept. 231), Merton House, St. Bride's Avenue, London, E.C.4.





# DON'T BE A WAGE-SLAVE!



**Start Right Away in Your Own Business!**  
With the Fruits of others' long and dearly bought Experience constantly at Hand, it is as good as having as Silent Partners in your Business the keenest, shrewdest Business Brains in Britain.

**D**O NOT be content merely to wish for a business of your own. Determine here and now to have one. You need not be deterred by lack of either experience or capital. The first we can give you—and of the second you have sufficient if you can command a few pounds, say, ten or even five.

## WHAT IS EXPERIENCE?

Often one hears experience spoken of as something which you must buy for yourself. In other words, you must make your mistakes in order to learn your lessons.

That is frankly absurd. Other people have made their mistakes. Why need you make the same mistakes all over again in order to learn the same lessons? By profiting by their experience you can avoid paying dearly for yours.

You can read in the pages of a wonderful booklet, "By Post to Prosperity," exactly how fortunes have been made in mail order. You can learn what to do to make success certain, and what not to do to avoid disappointment. This booklet is literally worth its weight in gold to the man determined to "get on." You can read in a few crisp sentences some cardinal principle of mail order which it has cost others thousands of pounds to discover.

## YOUR COPY OF THIS BOOKLET IS WAITING FOR YOU!

Send your name and address on a post card for a Copy of "By Post to Prosperity"—a booklet which tells exactly how £5 can be made the basis of independence. The acceptance of this booklet places you under no obligation. It is *GRATIS* and post free. Write that post card NOW and address it carefully to—

The A. G. SHAW INSTITUTE, Dept. C 25, 1, MONTAGUE STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

## OVERWHELMING ADVANTAGES.

Mail order is the most exact and scientific of all trading methods. The mail-order trader has many things in his favour. He has no high shop rents to pay, no heavy lighting bills to foot, no costly "appearances" to keep up, no shop assistants to pay whether business is good or bad, no rates and taxes to speak of, no large and varied stock to carry, and no bad debts. He can begin, if necessary, in a modest way, and by reinvesting profits he quickly reaches the stage where the business can comfortably stand a weekly drawing equivalent to three or four times the average worker's salary.

## IN YOUR SPARE TIME.

A mail-order business can easily be conducted in your spare time, until such time as it warrants your taking special premises and devoting your whole time and energies to it. Don't be a "wage-slave" when you can be independent. If you already have your own business, you can make extra golden profits by starting a mail-order department. In either case, "By Post to Prosperity" tells you HOW.

## The Test of Time.



## WHEN GRANDMAMA CAME OUT—

just like other girls the world over she wished to look her best. And it was about then the great remedy—Beecham's Pills—destined to be the best known and most popular family medicine, made its appearance.

Taken as required, they help to clear the complexion and skin and give that delightful health and beauty which are always every woman's chief asset.

TAKE YOUR CHOICE—  
TROUBLESOME ILLS

OR

# Beecham's Pills

YOU CAN'T HAVE BOTH.







# HALL'S DISTEMPER

(TRADE MARK)

## THE OIL-BOUND WATER PAINT.

By Appointment



to H.M. The King.

**HALL'S Distemper, made in 60 beautiful standard shades, is foremost among modern decorations.**

It combines art with health, and durability with both. Its quick drying velvety surface will not rub off, and withstands the hardest wear.

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## Koko Aids to Beauty

**Miss Flora Le Breton,**

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has 35 years' reputation. A clear non-greasy liquid of delightful fragrance, cooling and invigorating, and contains no dye. Promotes growth, Cleanses the Scalp, Strengthens Thin and Weak Hair, and ultimately Produces Thick, Luxuriant Tresses. **1/6, 3/- and 5/6 per bottle.**



*Miss Flora Le Breton.*

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this brush is sterilized by a Certified Process



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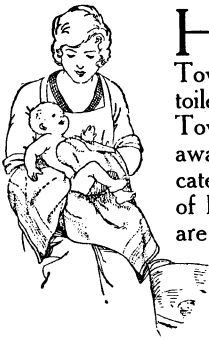
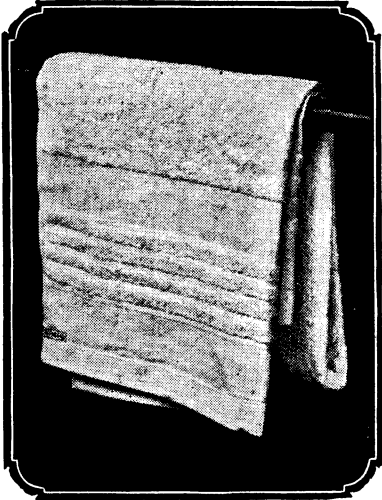
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**SHAVING BRUSH**

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Towels have been  
awarded the Certificate  
of the Institute  
of Hygiene, and they  
are guaranteed absolutely  
free from dressing. They  
are beautifully  
soft, unusually

absorbent, and can be relied upon  
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Stores at prices no higher  
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35/- (Reg'd) ”**  
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**Feather Weight STORMPROOF**

A "Mattamac" is identical in appearance with the usual five-guinea Weatherproof. In utility, also, it equals its much-more-costly competitor. It wears as long, weighs one-third, and is **absolutely Waterproof**. Though light and compact-folding, the "Mattamac" is Wind and Chill proof as well as Wet proof. You may own several outdoor Coats and still have need for this handiest Coat of all. Don't risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the **genuine** which is labelled "Mattamac" beneath the coat-hanger.

**WEIGHT**  
**19 ozs.**  
**FOLDS INTO**  
**THIS SIZE**

(Reg'd  
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**35/-**

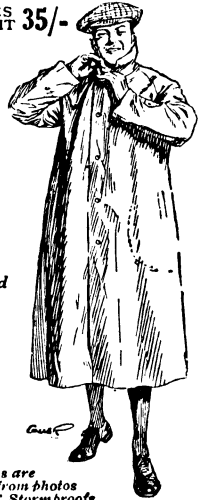
*For Ladies and Men.*  
"Matta" Fabric is exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 8 ft. man beneath, when folded, just made this handul. This is drawn from an actual photo of his hand and the "Mattamac" he wears, folded to fit snugly into his jacket pocket.

**3 ozs. HEAVIER THAN AN UMBRELLA**

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Colours :  
Fawn, Olive,  
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Blue shades.



*For Ladies  
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**Unbelted  
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(19-oz.)  
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(21 1/2 oz.)  
**39/6**



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**MADE FOR EVERY OUTDOOR PURPOSE.**  
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Stormproofs are only obtainable from the London and Birmingham  
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URACE and URACE alone, can cure Rheumatism. It directly attacks the cause—uric acid—dissolves and expels it from the system, and prevents its reappearance. This is why it CURES and CURES QUICKLY, 1/3, 3/- and 5/- per box from Boots, Timothy White & Co., Taylor's, and all Chemists and Stores, or direct from the URACE Laboratories, (Dept 52), 82, St. Thomas Street, London, S.E.1.



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**URACE**  
TABLETS  
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## A REWARD of 100 POUNDS For bald-headed and beardless.

An elegant growth of beard and hair can be produced when using "Comos" Hair Balm during eight days. This balm causes hair and beard to grow on all bald-headed persons or persons with thin hair. "Comos" is the best product of the modern science of this domain, being the only balsam which really produces hair and beard even on persons of old age. "Comos" brings the dormant Papillae of the hair to grow again after having been used a few days, and within a very short time you will have a very vigorous growth of hair. Harmlessness is guaranteed.

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a net amount of 100 Pounds to all bald-headed and beardless persons, or persons with thin hair, who have used the Comos Balsam for three weeks without any result.

One parcel of "Comos" costs £1:0:0, two parcels cost £1:15:0

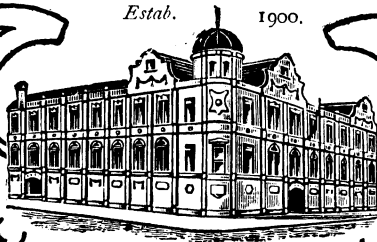
"Comos" gives to the hair and beard a becoming wave, as well as a soft and delicate texture. It will be sent to any part of Europe against payment in advance or against cash on delivery. Out of Europe, payment in advance.

**The COMOS-MAGAZINE Copenhagen V. Denmark 22.**



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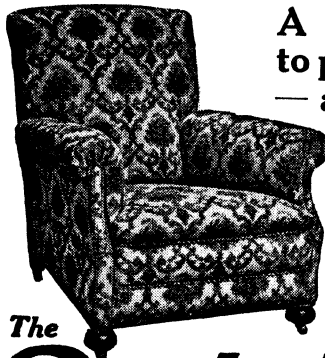
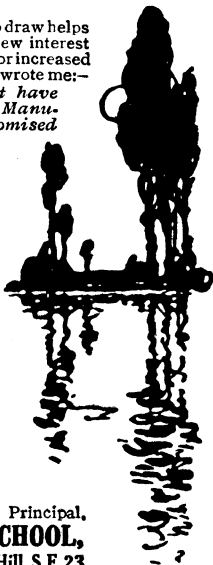
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That cure is

## BLAIR'S GOUT AND RHEUMATIC PILLS.

Take them and a happy life will dawn upon you.  
All Chemists, 1/3 and 3/.

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See the name "Britannic" is engraved inside the band, because every inferior imitations are offered as "Britannic" Bracelets by unscrupulous dealers.

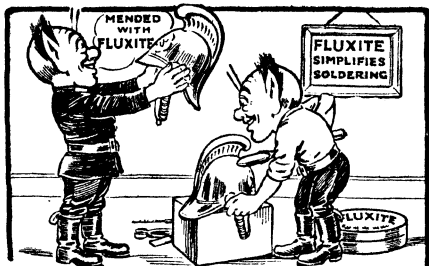
THE "Britannic" Expanding Bracelet has made an unrivalled world-wide reputation for its durability and the charm of its various designs. These bands are fully guaranteed for five years, and the springs will be renewed, free of charge, any time during that period, through any jeweller. The "Britannic" may be seen at all good-class jewellers complete with watches in various styles from £4 10s. Also "Britannic" Expanding Bands alone with hooks, to replace straps.

## The Queen of Watch Bracelets

# Foster Clark's

It's the Creamiest Custard





"Firemen brave,  
Firemen bold.  
Helmets agleam  
Look like gold."

If they crack—  
What d'ye do?  
Throw 'em away—  
Or mend 'em with glue?"

"No, m'y lad!  
Leave it to us.  
We solder 'em up  
Without any fuss."

Ever so easy—  
Simple as pie.  
FLUXITE'S the reason—  
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**S**OLDERING nowadays is a "walk-over" compared with soldering of years ago, before FLUXITE made its debut; and thanks to FLUXITE it will never be the fearsome job it used to be. Kettles, pots, and pans that were once thrown away are now soldered at home and put on the "useful list" once again.

ALL MECHANICS WILL HAVE

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## SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

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## FLUXITE SOLDERING SET

It is perfectly simple to use, and will last for years in constant use. It contains a special "small-space" Soldering Iron, with non-heating metal handle, a Pocket Blowlamp, FLUXITE, Solder, etc., and full instructions. Price **7/6**. Write to us should you be unable to obtain it. **FLUXITE, LTD., 201, Bevington St., Bermondsey, England.**

PRICE

**7/6**



**ANOTHER USE FOR FLUXITE.**  
**HARDENING TOOLS AND CASE HARDENING.**

Ask for Leaflet on improved methods.



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**E**AT plenty of good, nourishing bread. But let it be HOVIS because HOVIS contains full nourishment for the body.

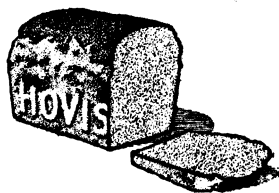
# HōVIS

(Trade Mark)

is made only from wheat, like white bread, but with this important difference: it contains added quantities of the vital 'germ' which constitutes its most nourishing and vitalising part.

## Your Baker Bakes it.

HOVIS LTD., MACCLESFIELD.





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Complete, with **SAFETY OUTSIDE HEATER.**

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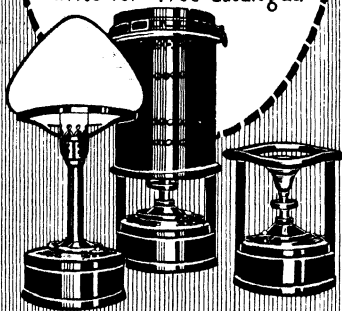
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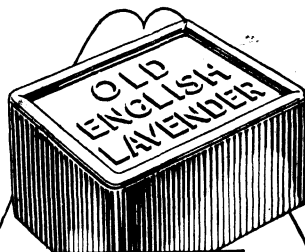
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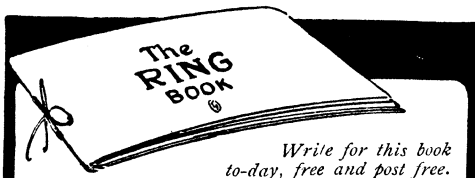
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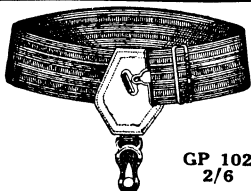
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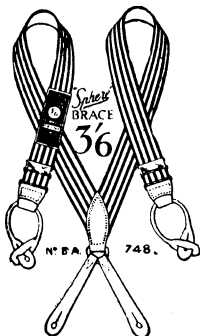
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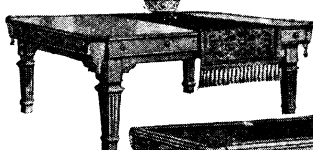
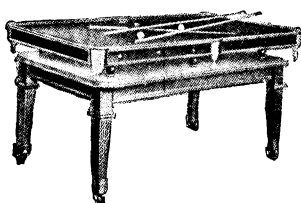
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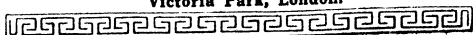


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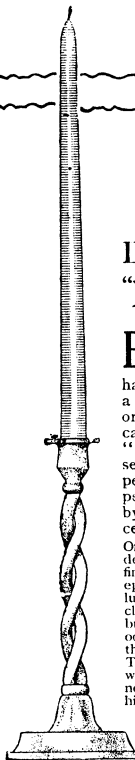
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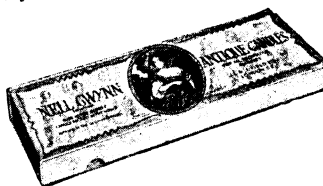
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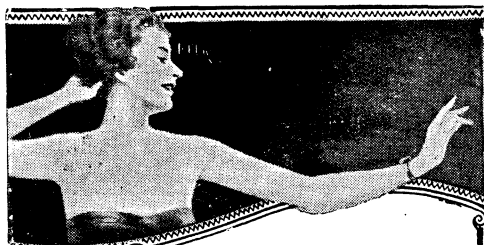
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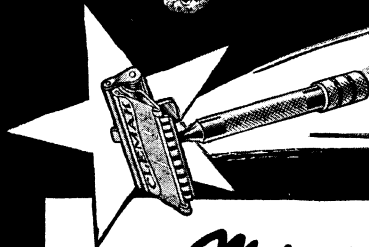
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# The Windsor Magazine.

No. 359.

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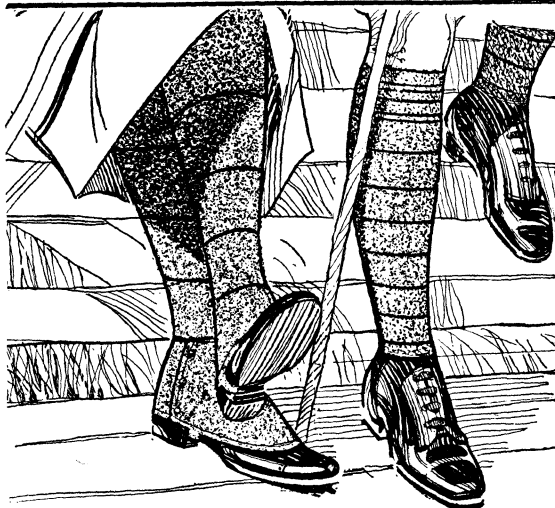
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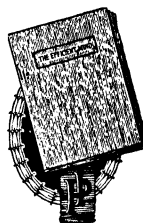
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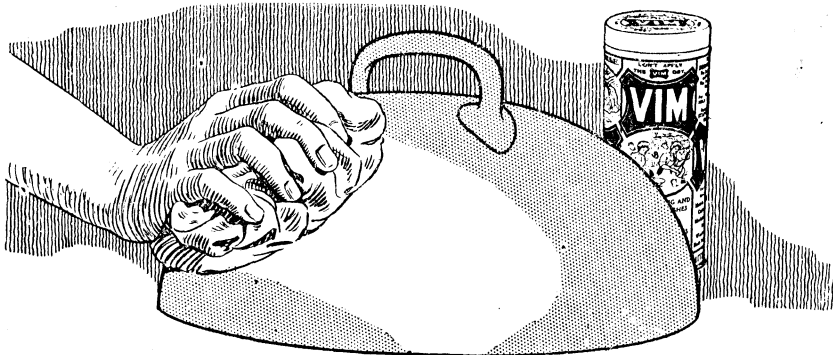
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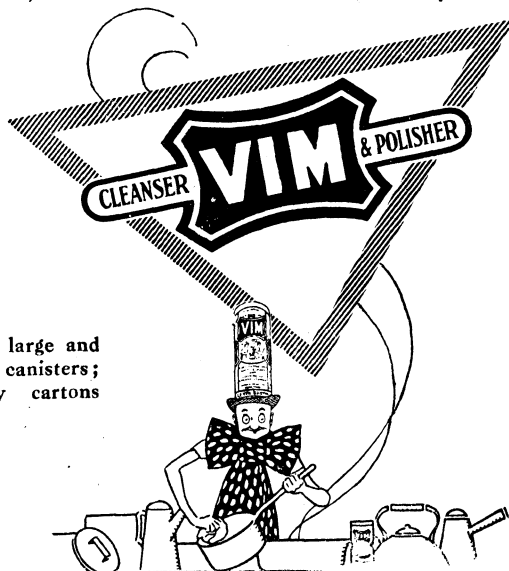


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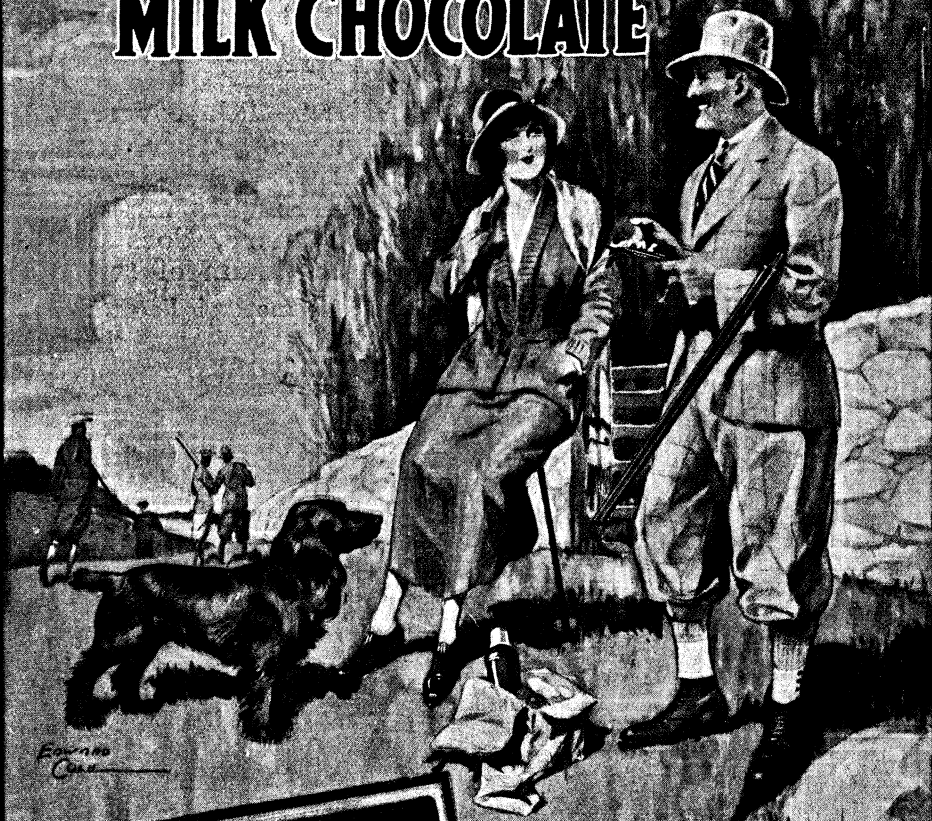
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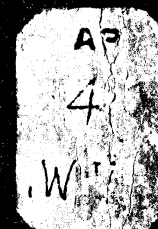


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